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Israel Beats War Drums Toward Syria

Tension increased between Israel and Syria last week over the deployment of anti-aircraft missiles by Syria near its border with Lebanon.

Top Israeli officials threatened Syria if it didn't withdraw the missiles which they said curtailed their freedom to send reconnaissance flights over Lebanon. Syria rejected US mediation efforts to remove the missiles and warned against a possible attack. Syrian Radio linked the recent Israeli threats to Syrian refusal to submit to US conditions for solving the Middle East conflict.

Prime Minister Shimon Peres topped off the verbal insults when he accused Syria of not being ready to join the peace process. "Syrian President Assad wanted to become the leader of the Arab world and to expand his country into Greater Syria," said Peres during a visit to Lydda December 17. Earlier, Israeli Chief of Staff Moshe Levy was quoted by *The Jerusalem Post* December 16 as saying that Israeli planes would continue to fly over Lebanon despite the deployment. Levy said that Israel was taking measures in response to the deployment, but declined to give details.

Although American officials say they do not expect a confrontation between Syria and Israel in the near future, the possibility of such a confrontation still exists, especially in light of Israeli determination to continue their flights over Lebanon.

The Israeli threats were coupled with a well-orchestrated media campaign. Israeli military officials announced December 15 that Syria had moved during the previous three weeks long-range Sam-2 missiles to the Syrian-Lebanese border at Zabadani. Other missile batteries of the same type were mobilized south of the port city of Tartus and southwest of Hums, the Israeli spokesperson said.

Israel also accused Syria of deploying Sam-6 and Sam-8 missile batteries in Lebanon on the Beirut-Damascus highway near Dahr al-Baider. *HaAretz* Hebrew daily, however, reported December 16 that Syria removed the missiles from Lebanon a few days after deploying them.

The Syrian missile deployment followed an air clash between Syrian and Israeli war planes over the Lebanese-Syrian border last November. Israel said then that two Syrian Mig 23 fighters were downed. Syria, however, reported that Israeli war planes were forced to withdraw from Syrian airspace after its Mig fighters intercepted them. Syria denied suffering any losses.

Israel worries that the Sam-2 batteries, with a range of 50 kilometers and maximum ceiling of 60,000 feet, curtail its freedom to conduct reconnaissance flights over Lebanon. Israel has been conducting regular flights over the country to gather intelligence information on Syrian, Palestinian and nationalist Lebanese forces. Israel has repeatedly used this information to plan the bombing of military bases.

Syria acknowledged December 16 that it had deployed missiles as "an act of self-defense" against Israeli war planes. The ruling party's official publication, *Al-Ba'ath* said December 16 that the positioning of the missiles had reduced Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace.

Delegation Banned From Meeting Arafat

Claiming they did not want to give Arafat publicity, Israeli officials prevented a planned visit to Amman earlier this week by a group of local personalities scheduled to meet the PLO chairman.

The 13-member delegation planned to meet Arafat to discuss the PLO's stance in regards to UN Resolutions 242 and 338, and the recent peace moves. The decision to ban the group's travel came apparently from the offices of Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Israeli military authorities told the Palestinians they could travel on an individual basis but not as a delegation. The authorities said they could not see Arafat.

Al Fajr Editor Hanna Siniora, a leading member of the group, said, "If the military authorities don't want this delegation to go, then they don't want us to make progress toward peace." Other members of the group included deposed Hebron Mayor Mustafa Natshe, recently appointed Nablus Mayor Thafer al-Masri, deposed Gaza Mayor Rashad al-Shawwa, Gaza lawyer Fayez Abu Rahmeh and other well known personalities. Siniora and Abu Rahmeh were recently agreed upon by the PLO, Jordan and Israel as acceptable members of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to participate in future peace talks.

A senior Israeli source was quoted in *The Jerusalem Post* December 18 as saying that the Israeli government "does not have hopes of anything coming of such a meeting, that Peres and Rabin do not want to enter into unnecessary conflicts with the Likud, and that Israel does not want to encourage and give publicity to Arafat." The source's reference to a possible conflict with the Likud over the group's meeting with Arafat was ironic since the Likud government of Yitzhak Shamir permitted a delegation of 31 Palestinians to meet with Arafat in February 1984.

Mustafa Natshe saw the meeting ban as an attempt by the Israelis to maintain the

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Thirteen More Held in Detention

Thirteen more Palestinians from the West Bank were arrested and held under administrative detention orders last week. This brings the number held under similar orders since September to more than 100.

Four detainees are from Ramallah, four from Nablus, three from Bethlehem, one from Beit Sahur and one from Hebron.

Among the new detainees are Ramallah resident, Dr. Munther Sharif, former deputy of the Doctors' Union in the West Bank; Riad Sulh, an accountant for the Balsam Factory in Ramallah; Nablus resident Muhammad Sawalha, a lecturer in English at an-Najah University; and Kobar resident, Tawfiq Barghouthi, a watchman at Bir Zeit University. Also arrested were two Bethlehem University students: Ziad Abu Laban from Dheisheh Refugee Camp and Issa Qaraqeh from Aida Refugee Camp.

Dr. Hiam Sharif, Munther Sharif's wife, visited her husband December 16 and said that he was completely surprised by the arrest. "There is no justification for his arrest," she said. "He spends most of his time working at his clinic in Ramallah and at the UNRWA clinic in al-Am'ari Refugee Camp or supervising the process of his house construction." She added that her husband's arrest is a strong blow to the family. Sharif, 40, has three children. He was previously detained for 20 months on so-called 'security charges'. Hiam Sharif asserted that since her husband's release he has not been involved in any political activities.

Riad Sulh, 36, was arrested and held for three years in 1976 on charges of illegal membership in a Palestinian organization. Soldiers came to his home in Ramallah December 14 at 11:00 p.m. His wife Ahida said, "There is no charge against him." Sulh also runs a carpentry and furniture store in Ramallah.

Tawfiq Barghouthi, 38, was taken from his home in Kober.

The lawyer for three of the detainees, Ibrahim Abu Atta, told *Al Fajr* that his clients were remanded into custody on December 16 for an additional 96 hours. He expects the convention of a court session next week. Abu Atta told *Al Fajr* that "the authorities claim that my clients are engaged in political activities. I will demand from the court to notify me of the reasons for their arrest."

The public relations office at an-Najah University issued a press release naming faculty members who were arrested by the Israeli authorities. The statement said: "We have strong reason to believe that these arrests are part of a campaign aimed at sabotaging the academic life of the university." The number of students and lecturers from an-Najah University placed under administrative detention is now 20. Abd al-Latif Ramadan, a second year student at the university, was arrested on December 11 and his whereabouts are still unknown. It is not clear whether or not he too was placed under administrative detention.

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To our readers:

AL FAJR will not appear locally next week. Our next Jerusalem issue will be January 3, 1986.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Delegates at the mock international conference are (left to right) Abba Eban, Harry van den Berg, Elias Freij and Hanna Siniora./AFP Photo.

SINIORA CALLS FOR 1947 LINES

Mock International Conference Held in Jerusalem

by Daoud Kuttab

Did you hear the news? The United States announced its recognition of the Palestinians' right to self-determination. Or so they would if real life were anything like one's make-believe.

This mythical US announcement came December 15 in the second session of a simulated international peace conference sponsored by the International Center for Peace in the Middle East. The simulated conference was held at the Tel Ad television studio in West Jerusalem.

The conference took place on the mythical assumption that the superpowers had agreed to hold it, that Arab states had agreed to join and that Israel's coalition had collapsed leaving Shimon Peres to head a Labor government with a narrow majority. Former Assistant Secretary of State Harold Saunders represented the US; *Al Fajr* Responsible Editor Hanna Siniora, the PLO; Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij, Jordan; and Member of Knesset Abba Eban, Israel.

In his opening remarks, the PLO representative thanked the conferees for accepting the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and called for the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital. He also suggested that remaining areas designated by the 1947 partition plan as part of the Arab state could be negotiated. Hanna Siniora is in the real peace process as a member of the Palestinian-Jordanian delegation. In the simulation, he said that the area between the 1947 partition plan and the 1949 armistice lines could be jointly administered or perhaps the boundary lines redrawn to take into consideration the Arab population now living in the Galilee.

As a goodwill gesture, he said the PLO would stop military attacks during the duration of the negotiations if the Israeli delegate would agree to halt the building of settlements, to declare a general amnesty for Palestinian political prisoners and to stop the repressive measures of the military authorities in the occupied territories.

The Jordanian representative stressed the PLO as the legitimate and sole representative of the Palestinian people and called upon Israel to withdraw from areas occupied in 1967 as well as areas occupied in Lebanon.

The Israeli position, spoken by Eban who is now head of the Knesset Foreign Relations and Security Committee, was vague. The Israeli representative did, however, voice opposition to ruling more than one million Arabs. He did not offer any solution or state what Israel would agree to in the future. He refused to give up Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem or to give a public commitment on total Israeli withdrawal from areas occupied in 1967.

The delegates did agree to form four working groups to discuss the transition from military government to Arab rule; the demarcation lines between Israel and the proposed Jordanian-Palestinian entity and between Israel and Syria; the future of Jerusalem; and the normalization of relations and the outlook for future peace.

Three Israeli professors represented the Soviet Union, Egypt and Syria. However, Professor Moshe Ma'oz, a known Arabist, presented more the Israeli stereotype of Syria rather than an objective look at Syrian officials. The Israeli editor of *Davar*, Hanna Zimmer, chaired the conference.

At present, the idea of an international conference is far from reality. The US and Israel object to such a conference and to the participation of the Soviet Union and the PLO in any negotiations.

After the simulation, Willi Gafni, project director for the Peace Center, told *Al Fajr* that the videotape of the simulation will be used in Israel, throughout the Arab world and in the West for educational purposes. The American ABC network has already bought rights to a section of the simulation to show to the US audience.

In a statement following the simulation, Israel's Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir criticized Hanna Siniora's demand on behalf of the Palestinians for Arab sovereignty over areas within the 1949 borders of Israel.

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Israelis, Palestinians Protest Deportations

More than 25 Israeli and Palestinian figures condemned Israeli intentions to deport four Palestinian men. The four have been in prison pending their deportation since October 27.

Israeli and Palestinian figures met December 17 at a club belonging to the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality party in West Jerusalem.

Those speaking against the deportations were Tova Adiv, mother of ex-political prisoner Udi Adiv; Dr. Rami Amit, ex-prisoner; Ahmad Nazzal, a lawyer from Felicia Langer's office; and Amal Wahdan, a unionist.

Adiv presented a petition on which she had collected signatures of Israeli doctors demanding the release of Dentist Azmi Shu'aibi, who is suffering from tuberculosis. The petition was published in the Hebrew daily *HaAretz*. It read that Zionist leaders who had previously opposed deporting Jews from Israel simply because they were Jews had raised no opposition to deporting Palestinians.

Adiv pointed to an incident in which Madaiv France and Dr. Goldman, two French Zionist leaders, condemned plans to deport her son Udi 10 years ago saying, "It is worse than death to deport a Jew from Israel." Tova said, "But when it comes to the issue of deporting Palestinians, the deportation is not as terrible as a death sentence."

Dr. Amit, who works at Hadassah Hospital, told the audience that Israeli doctors at Hadassah do not discriminate between Jews and Palestinians when offering medical treatment. However, he said, the same doctors were warned by Israeli intelligence that the four men were to be deported and that the doctors should show no interest in their case.

Lawyer Nazzal spoke about his visit to three of his clients in Jnaid Prison December 17. He said he was stopped at a military checkpost. When he translated into Arabic what the Israeli soldier had said to him for some other Palestinians with him in his car, the lawyer was ordered to get out of his car and to raise his hands in the air while the soldiers harassed him.

Abu Dis unionist Wahdan dismissed the Israeli claim that the four were working on behalf of "illegal organizations". She said that the authorities' claim that the Bethlehem Press Office in which Hassan Abd al-Jawad worked is an organ of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine is ridiculous, partly because it is still operating despite that fact that al-Jawad is in jail. "The authorities have no evidence against the press office or the workers' union in Abu Dis, where Ali Abu Hilal served," she said.

Israelis and Palestinians protesting deportations /Derech Hanitzotz

Delegation

Continued from page 1

status quo of political deadlock in the area. "They fear that Arafat and us could approach some concrete results if we meet and thus embarrass them," he said. "They simply do not want the people in the occupied territories to maintain contact with their leadership, thus alienating us from political action."

Natshe refuted Israeli media claims that the 13-member group had intended to pressure Arafat to accept the two UN resolutions, to "denounce terrorism," and even to recognize Israel's "right to exist". He said, "We simply wanted to consult with Arafat and to get updated on the PLO's political moves." Arafat was due to arrive in Amman sometime next week.

Natshe said that the decision to go to Amman followed the group's recent meeting with US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy at the American Consulate in West Jerusalem. Murphy was quoted after the meeting as saying that there was some progress toward the convening of an international conference for peace in the area. The US later condemned the Israeli decision to ban the group from meeting with Arafat. "It's clear that West Bankers and Gazans have a unique contribution to make to the peace process, which in the first instance involves their future," a US State Department official said. "It is therefore unfortunate that they were unable to travel to Amman and have their own impact on these events there."

Science College In Uproar; Students Demand Elected Council

Abu Dis students meet to discuss their demand for an elected student council./AO Photo.

by Baher Ashhab

Students at Abu Dis College of Science and Technology say that 90 percent of the student body wants a student council. The administration, on the other hand, says that only a minority of the students want to change the *status quo* and those who do are merely incited to action by a few self-interested students.

This is just an example of the recent internal problems at this science college situated in Abu Dis just 10 kilometers east of Jerusalem. The internal conflict has resulted in the school's closure for the last two weeks. It may also result in the cancellation of the first semester for the first time in the school's four-year history. The situation at Abu Dis may serve to reflect the condition of student councils at all colleges and universities in the occupied territories. The councils have both been considered a blessing and obstruction to the process of education in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Background to the Conflict

A group of students at Abu Dis approached the administration four weeks ago requesting the establishment of a student council and the convening of student elections. The administration immediately rejected the request and took a decision by the board of directors to disallow such activities. In response, the students threatened a strike and actually began a partial one. The administration then closed the college altogether. On December 16, the students met and held a press conference in which they vowed to continue their strike even if it meant the cancellation of this or the next semester. The college responded by holding up the registration of eight student leaders.

Attempts to hold an open meeting between students and administration to find a compromise failed. On at least one occasion, student leaders locked administration members out of the meeting hall because they said a meeting should only be held with student representatives, not the whole student body, for fear of dissension among the students. The administration told the students through announcements in the local press that if students did not attend classes December 21, they should not come to school until the second semester starts in late January.

Student sources told *Al Fajr* they are divided among themselves on how to respond to the administration's ultimatum. At least a dozen or so fourth-year students due to graduate this semester may heed administration calls. There is a chance, however, that some militant students may prevent those who may attempt to go back to class. Security personnel at the college are reported to be preparing themselves to break up whatever clashes they predict may occur as a result.

Students' Argument

From the students' point of view, student councils are an essential part of university life and no college should be without one. They argue that communication between themselves and the administration has been minimal, resulting in a situation in which the administration has been callous toward student needs and been more concerned with what students call their own "foreign dictated" policies. They say that since the Abu Dis administration receives the bulk of the college funding from Jordan and Kuwait, then they are also told how to run the college from abroad. This, says the students, means their orders often contradict local values and needs. The students say they would like a voice in such issues as student residences, health insurance, grants and loans. Their main argument is, however, that they want an elected student body to maintain an open channel of communication with the administration when complaints and grievances need to be aired. They say the administration now deals with student complaints only on a personal basis.

Administration's Argument

The administration claims that because there has been no student council, studies have been maintained on a regular basis throughout the four years. There have been no closures, disruptions or clashes between politically motivated students groups. They hinted that student councils at other schools have indirectly caused the disruption of classes and the postponement of graduation of hundreds of students. "This college is established to prepare students for the tough, challenging environment that we live in. The minute they assume they can take charge of their own education affairs at this college, the purpose is obliterated," said one college academic. The administration fears that the students will get out of hand and start interfering in the way the college is run. "In other colleges, student leaders often manipulate other students into striking or disrupting schools so as to dodge exams or because of personal conflicts with individual professors. We cannot afford to have that here at Abu Dis," said the academic, who asked not to be named.

The administration put forth a counterproposal to hold a monthly forum with the entire student body to discuss issues of concern to both parties. They also initiated a system of teacher-advisers to whom the students could refer in case of academic, social or personal conflicts. But a student council is out of the question, they insist.

Tension between the students and administration rose as the deadlock persisted. At one point, instructors stayed home for fear of personal attacks on them, especially on December 9 when students planned a demonstration on the college campus. The student demonstration was, however, well organized and quiet in which banners demanding a student council were held aloft. However, a group of students, says the administration, changed the locks on several classrooms in order to prevent students who wanted to continue studying from doing so. Others formed groups that stood in the way of students and instructors who were trying to enter classrooms. The administration claims the eight students whose registrations have been held up are responsible for these actions. The administration appointed a committee to investigate the incidences looking for those responsible and ways to reprimand them.

As it stands now, the problem seems to be far from solvable since neither students nor administration is willing to listen to the other. Meanwhile, studies at this one quiet college have halted leaving some 550 young men and women with idle time on their hands. One administration official suggested bitterly that Israeli military officials must be saying to themselves, "Well, we didn't have to do it this time. They did it (closed the college) themselves."

Two Universities Elect Pro-Fatah Student Councils

Bir Zeit election /ON photo

Student lists identified with the main PLO line swept into power filling all student council seats in both Bir Zeit and Hebron Universities' elections December 16.

At BZU a list made up of the Palestinian Student Youth Movement and calling itself the Tunis Martyrs Bloc won all nine student council seats. They won 37.8 percent of the vote. BZU has 2250 students eligible to cast their ballot.

Also running in the BZU elections was the leftist alliance called Unity and Progress Bloc which received 34.9 percent of the vote. This represents a significant increase for this bloc which obtained only 26.6 percent of the vote in 1984. The Student Youth Movement's 1984 bloc, which was allied with the Student Unity Bloc, got 38.8 percent in the last year's student election.

The Islamic Bloc received this year 27.3 percent of the student vote. This represents a considerable decline from last year when the Islamic Bloc was ranked second among the three competing lists.

Hebron

At Hebron University, which is a traditional center for competition between the Student Youth Movement and Islamic Blocs, the Youth Movement Bloc calling itself the Martyr Fahd Qawasmeh Bloc won 50.5 percent of the student vote. The Islamic Bloc won 43.2 percent of the vote. There are 1518 students eligible to vote. The leftist alliance Unity and Progress Bloc got only 6.3 percent.

Last year, the Islamic Bloc at Hebron University won the student council election.

Soldiers Storm Najah Student Council Offices

Israeli soldiers laid siege to Najah University five out of eight days last week. At one point, more than 200 soldiers broke into the student council and the Public Relations Department offices.

Fearing what they termed was "an illegal gathering" of students at the Nablus university, the Israeli military set up roadblocks on all main roads leading to campus December 11 and 12. Students were unable to attend classes or to reach the university.

On December 5 students held a meeting — reportedly of a political nature — in the midst of preparations for student council elections to be held soon. The next morning, December 16, the military again barricaded university access roads and summoned Dr. Bahjat Sabri, deputy chairman of university administrative affairs, to the Israeli military headquarters in Nablus. Sabri was asked about the student meeting the previous day. According to Sa'eb Erakat, Najah public relations director, Sabri told the military the students were preparing for elections to the student council.

"It is impossible to find a normal person or an institution not involved in politics. An-Najah University cannot erect a fence around it and fix a sign saying 'Politics is Forbidden'. We have the right to express ourselves," said Erakat.

On December 17, soldiers once again prevented students and faculty from reaching the

Continued on page 13

JEC Board, Employees In Dispute Over Proposed Cutbacks

by Baher Ashhab

Jerusalem Electric Company's board of directors is in for a bitter dispute with the company's 500 employees who refused this week to consider austerity proposals put forth by the board.

These proposals which company directors say are meant to save the only Arab-operated public service company in Jerusalem a sum of JD20,000 (US$50,000) per month are reported to have originated from the Jordanian government. Amman recently released JD2.5 million (US$6.25 million) to the company to help it pay off its debts to Israeli banks and to the Israeli Electric Company for electricity purchased in the past. IEC had threatened to cut its electricity supply to JEC altogether unless JEC paid the debts which were accumulating at a rate of JD100,000 (US$250,000) per month. Amman also promised to subsidize JEC's operation by paying some JD150,000 (US$375,000) a month. These payments, however, are tied to conditions that include a reduction in staff and expenditures. The company's powerful employees' union has challenged these conditions.

The conditions set by the Jordanian government, according to *Al Fajr* sources are: a 10 percent reduction in staff, a 30 percent reduction in real wages, and shutting off of a generator which provides the company with 10 percent electricity output. The company purchases the other 90 percent from the IEC. The shutting off of the generator would make JEC totally dependent on its purchase of electricity from the Israeli company, but Amman insists it is cheaper for the company to purchase the current rather than produce it.

The Jordanian government instructed the Palestinian-Jordanian Joint Committee, which was devised in 1978 to fund West Bank projects, to make the payments only if JEC cuts down its operation by JD20,000 a month. This would necessitate layoffs and wage reductions.

Upon their return from Amman, JEC board members met and decided to implement Amman's conditions. They were met with severe opposition by JEC employees however. Union secretary Abed Abu Diab told the board that "those who can pay JD150,000 per month can pay an extra JD20,000." Though he left open the channels for communication with the board, he told *Al Fajr* that his union will never accept Amman's conditions.

Abu Diab relayed the union's position to the board in their meeting December 17. He told them that the union would only work on a new contract. "The current contract is unnegotiable," he told them. He suggested that the company pay the employees a certain amount for past years of service and then draft a new contract in which an acceptable reduction of wages could be negotiated. He suggested that the Joint Committee pay the difference since the employees "have paid their dues already by merely remaining steadfast in the troubled company and in occupied Jerusalem." He further suggested that the board and union establish a joint committee of their own to evaluate the company's problems and search for solutions. The board, however, refused, saying that only the board is responsible for running the company.

Anwar Nuseibeh (left) Abed Abu Diab /file photo

JEC Director General Munther Abu S'ood told *Al Fajr* that the board appreciates the employees' position, but that they should show more flexibility. "We are all making sacrifices," he said. Though the proposed measures will only produce miniscule financial gain, he said that the company has to show Amman that it too "is making a sacrifice." He said the Joint Committee actually did the company a favor by providing the funds since "it really doesn't have to."

JEC is the only public service company in Jerusalem that is fully operated by Palestinians. If it falls, it would fall into the hands of Israeli companies just as water service companies did before it. Israeli government officials have in the past exerted some pressure on JEC to allow Israeli personnel to co-manage it, but both the board and the union resisted.

JEC currently buys some 90 percent of its electricity output from IEC but is only allowed to make a seven percent profit from it. JEC demanded a 50 percent profit margin but the Israeli government refused. Coupled with a 17 percent monthly operational loss, the company needs JD200,000 (US$500,000) per month to balance its budget.

With JD150,000 from Amman and JD20,000 from internal austerity measures, the company would still need JD30,000 (US$75,000) a month to break even. It hopes to make that up by buying Israeli current at a decreased rate. The JEC head met recently with the Israeli energy minister and asked him to lower the price of electricity the company buys from the IEC. The minister promised to study the matter. IEC is also heavily subsidized by the Israeli government.

The company planned to put into operation five new generators which would have boosted its current production from 10 to 23 percent. But with the Amman demand that it buy all of its current from Israel, it does not look likely that they will turn on the new generators.

This is another point in Amman's conditions the union objects to. They say that only increases their dependence on Israel when JEC is trying desperately to maintain its independence.

The board members told *Al Fajr* they will meet union representatives over the next few weeks to further discuss Amman's demands. The company's union, however, seems to be determined to stick to its position. The only way out, say Abu Diab, is for the Joint Committee to "pay its dues as it should."

PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION
Chairman's Office

منظمة التحرير الفلسطينية
مكتب الرئيس

Copy of Arafat's letter

Arafat Thanks Neturei Karta

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat sent a letter to the anti-Zionist *Neturei Karta* movement following the movement's cable of condolence for Israel's air raid on the PLO in Tunis.

In his official reply dated November 2 and directed to the London branch of *Neturei Karta*, Arafat thanked the Orthodox Jewish movement for its "honest, brotherly feelings and principled position in support of the just Palestinian cause." The PLO chairman also called the Jewish group "an integral part of the Palestinian people" and promised that Palestinians "will not be deterred by the official Zionist terror and crime."

In a related story, officials of *Neturei Karta* in Jerusalem refuted claims published in Israeli papers that "Yemenite Jews were being slaughtered by the thousands." *Neturei Karta* officials referred to earlier reports about missing Yemenite Jews which were proved baseless by the US Ambassador in Yemen.

Neturei Karta sources referred to an article published in the Jewish Yemenite paper *Akifa* in 1984 explaining that an Israeli official had told the Yemenite community not to worry about similar news reports which are part of "the propaganda war against the PLO."

Hunger Strike in Three Prisons Suspended

Palestinian political prisoners in three lockups suspended a hunger strike December 12 and 13 following an Israeli pledge to a meeting to discuss prisoner demands for improved living conditions.

Prisoners in Nablus' Jnaid, Jenin and Hebron Prisons halted their strike after the Israeli Prison Authority Director Rafi Suissa agreed to meet with them immediately. The meeting was planned for December 15. No information on the scheduled meeting was available.

On a visit made by Suissa to Jenin Prison three days earlier, he met nearly 50 percent of the prisoners' demands. He also promised that the rest of their demands would be discussed. The demands he met included supplying hot and cold water; fixing broken water basins, tables and chairs; paving the rooms with concrete; opening an additional window in the ceiling of each room; placing glass on the windows; and permitting Western newspapers, a radio and a TV to be bought at prisoners' expense. He also met the major demands of allowing an Arab medical specialist to examine the patients in the prison, and to extend the families' visits from two to three days each week.

A statement issued by the prisoners stated that they decided to suspend the strike in order to bring life back to normal in the prisons, hoping that their demands would be met.

About 1500 Palestinian political prisoners went on hunger strike at the beginning of December in various prisons in Israel and the occupied territories, demanding improvements in prison conditions. The strike sparked a popular protest against Israeli measures. Sit-in strikes were carried out continuously at the Red Cross offices in much of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. They were met with wide media coverage in the country and outside.

AL FAJR
AL FAJR – Jerusalem Palestinian Weekly

Publisher:
Paul A. Ajlouny
Editor:
Hanna Siniora

Tel: (02) 281035
P.O. Box 19315
2 Hatem at-Taee St.
East Jerusalem 91192

Telex no.s:
Jerusalem: 26467 omar il
Washington: 64677 omar uw

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Throwing Stones

Once again Israeli politicians are sounding off about the 'threat' of Syrian missiles being installed in sovereign Syrian territory. The Israeli government and its ally the United States are trying to convince the world that the Syrian move is an act of aggression. According to Israel, the Syrian missiles being installed near the Syria-Lebanese border create difficulties for the Israeli air force which has been up until now allowed to roam freely in the Lebanese skies with no one in the law-abiding international community speaking out against it.

The Israelis say that if the situation in Lebanon was stable, then they would respect Lebanese airspace. But, they say, as long as there is civil war in Lebanon and a weak central government, then Israel has the right to do whatever it pleases in the name of self-defense.

Let us look carefully at this argument. The Syrians are not allowed to move anti-aircraft batteries on their own internationally recognized turf or even near another neighboring Arab country with which Syria shares an Arab defense pact. Yet, the Israelis – a country hostile to Arabs – has illegally occupied the Syrian Golan Heights and part of Lebanon and at the same time has the right to Lebanese airspace and even Syrian airspace if any Syrian planes fly close to Lebanon. This is the height of arrogance.

If these illogical statements had been made by the Israeli government alone, then they could be understood for what little they are worth and subsequently dismissed. But when the US government echoes them, that is another story.

Here we have a world superpower claiming to be a neutral arbitrator based on democratic principles and on the principle of the rule of law. Yet it interferes with the Syrian army's internal maneuvers. What would the US say if an Arab country demanded the American sixth fleet leave the Mediterranean, or more accurately, demand the US not deploy MX missiles on its own soil – in Utah, perhaps? This is exactly what Israel and the US are saying.

What the US and Israel have to realize is that they cannot act so arrogantly and then cry 'foul' when they are attacked. As the saying goes: 'If your house is made of glass, don't throw stones at your neighbors.'

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Shafiq al-Hout: An Independent Critic

by Ghassan Bishara
Our Washington, D.C. Correspondent

With all that Shafiq al-Hout has been exposed to in Beirut, one would think he would be the last person to uplift the spirits of depressed Palestinians in America. Al-Hout has been the PLO representative in Lebanon for years. He stayed in his position even after the departure of Palestinian fighters and the PLO leadership from Beirut following the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. He was there during the massacre of Sabra and Shatila in the fall of 1982 and he witnessed the camp wars of spring 1985. Yet, al-Hout brings a certain optimism to Palestinians in the diaspora who feel a bit lost in the storm that has afflicted their people.

It is not that al-Hout is oblivious to the events in Beirut, but rather that he possesses the qualities of a leader who can't afford the luxury of depression and who thus must overcome all that has happened in Beirut. With the pervading gloominess of Palestinian affairs, al-Hout does not spare a minute in order to find and expose the causes of the ailment currently afflicting the cause and to diligently pursue every means available for therapy and cure. He has thus been labeled a permanent optimist. Yet, he is also a critic within the Palestinian movement. He doesn't mind either label.

One can easily sense and sometimes even share in the pain al-Hout has witnessed, especially when he talks about the Palestinians in Lebanon who have had more than their share of pain. All Palestinian children and mothers, Shafiq says, are just like his mother and children; their pain is his pain and their joy his as well. This can be said of most Palestinians, but it is al-Hout's talents as a writer and speaker that make him better equipped to express those feelings.

He is an intellectual and eloquent speaker, and when he addresses an audience, particularly in Arabic, he can also be mesmerizing. Al-Hout clearly prides himself as being among the minority of Palestinians who are "non-partisan". This, people who know him say, makes it easier for him to criticize every faction of the PLO, and he does so often. Al-Hout's speech at the 16th Palestine National Council session in Algiers in 1982, for example, was the most, if not the only, reflective speech at that session. He decried the general secretaries of the PLO factions for not voicing criticism during that first session following the departure from Beirut, adding, "Your speeches here are only to attract applause and not to encourage action."

Al-Hout argued that by accepting the UN charter, the PLO was accepting whatever obligations that charter implies for those states and organizations that join it. Addressing the general secretaries once again, he shouted, "How many times have you threatened to destroy American interests in the region?" Answering his own question, he said, "You know that not one bullet was fired against [even] an American bar in this region." Al-Hout stressed the need for a reassessment of the post-Beirut period and its consequences, a reassessment which, he believed, was missing.

At the 17th PNC in Amman, al-Hout was true to his ideals, reminding those in attendance of his earlier speech in Algiers, of the consequences of the departure from Beirut, and of the tendency to act as if nothing had changed. He said that the PNC should be the testing ground for the Palestinian mind, not only a stage for applause.

Recently, while in New York City, al-Hout was again at his best when he addressed the Palestine Aid Society. PAS is a non-profit, tax-exempt, charitable organization with 23 chapters in the US. PAS helps needy Palestinians and Lebanese, as well as Palestinian and Lebanese institutions in the West Bank, Gaza and in Lebanon. Al-Hout thanked PAS for the contributions they provide to those in need in Lebanon, acknowledging their limited resources.

Al-Hout condemned, in harsh terms, divisions within Palestinian factions, saying that when Palestinian camps were the target of attacks, the enemy didn't discriminate between those factions. All Palestinians are targeted, not only by the Israeli enemy, but also by reactionary Arab forces. "We all are marked for final annihilation by Zionism, imperialism and the new Arab reaction; those of us in the Middle East are considered an 'extra' people who have no country, and thus the mission is to finish us," he said. "This makes it more important for us to unite and for Palestinian factions to do likewise. Once our country was sold and our people expelled," he said, "all that remained for us was the symbol of our nation, the PLO, and it is our duty to protect it from any harm." Palestinians, he said, "do not struggle for Yasser Arafat, for George Habash or Nayef Hawatmeh but for Palestine and for our people; although we brought them to speak for us, we can also depose them whenever we wish."

Al-Hout then spoke about the attempts by some Arab governments to control the PLO, warning that this is something that the Palestinian people will not allow. He blamed the Arab governments for the defeats in all of the Arab-Israeli wars, singling out the 1973 war that was destined to produce the Camp David accords. Pre-empting any attempt to label him as a Palestinian provincialist or chauvinist, al-Hout said, "I would want to die only with an Arab identity since the Palestinian, first and foremost, is an Arab." Al-Hout advised those Arab governments who are hard at work trying to subdue and control the PLO to "let us run our own affairs with our PNC, our institutions as we wish... To be temporarily homeless and countryless, it was imposed on us, but never will we accept any force that aims to take away our right to speak our minds freely."

Al-Hout said that Palestinians are well-qualified to choose both their leaders and the policies those leaders should follow. He criticized those Arab governments who insist on imposing their brand of leadership on the Palestinian people. "We don't tell Egypt, Jordan, Iraq or the *Maghreb* (Morocco) who should govern them. Why then are they trying to tell us who our leaders should be? Don't they trust our ability to come up with those who we want?"

At the 17th PNC session, Shafiq al-Hout, more than any other member of that body, exemplified Palestinian independence in addressing difficult questions to both Palestinian and Jordanian leaders. Without addressing the value or lack of armed struggle, al-Hout questioned those PLO leaders who call for continued armed struggle, saying, "Precisely where is the armed struggle supposed to be carried out from? From Jordan it is certainly disallowed as is the case from all other Arab borders." With great pain, al-Hout defiantly said, "Our ranks are full of errors and what is probably needed is an internal revolution." ■

AL FAJR invites our readers to contribute letters, articles and opinions. Contributions must be signed, but names may be withheld upon request.

A Shared Plan

Thafer al-Masri accepting appointment from the head of the Israeli 'civil administration'.

by Awad Abdel Fattah

Amid the repressive measures currently undertaken by Israel in the territories occupied in 1967, the military government has appointed an Arab mayor in Nablus. This step comes three years after the removal of the elected municipalities which were replaced with Israeli officers.

The talk about the so-called 'Arabization' of the municipalities began shortly after the formation of the coalition government in Israel. It has been accompanied by two contradictory themes: an announcement of the 'improvement of the quality of life' in the occupied territories, and 'a crackdown on national forces as part of what has become known as the "iron fist" policy.' So far, more than 25 Palestinians have been deported and more than 100 administrative detainees held without charges or trial. This is in addition to hundreds of arrests.

Shimon Peres, Israel's prime minister, justified these measures by saying during his latest visit to Washington that his government has "to strike the extreme elements which stand as an obstacle in the way of the implementation of the plan to improve the quality of conditions in the occupied territories."

The question which poses itself is why does Israel now after 18 years of occupation want to improve the living conditions of the Palestinians? And how could the "extreme elements" be against the alleviating of their people's suffering as Israel claims?

Most Palestinians who have lived their lives under the gun of Israeli policies in the occupied territories have expressed distrust in Israeli intentions. The important thing very clear to all Palestinians, even those who view things in a purely pragmatic way, is Israel's insistence on rejecting any real independence for the Palestinian people.

Therefore, Israel's recent measures – particularly the appointment of Thafer al-Masri, a pro-Jordanian figure, as the mayor of Nablus – are in line with the Israeli attempt to permanently maintain its occupation of Arab territories.

To talk about Israeli policies in the occupied territories as separate from direct or indirect Jordanian involvement is to have an incomplete picture of what is now being planned concerning the occupied territories. This is because both Israel and Jordan are interested in the West Bank and both consider the PLO their foe. Jordan wants it (the West Bank) to be returned to the kingdom without the PLO, and Israel wants to keep it with a maximum 'concession' of granting self-autonomy to the people but not the land. This explains King Hussein's statement made after recent internal strife in Fatah, in which he said that if the PLO proved to be unable to reflect the aspirations of the Palestinian people, he would act on his own initiative. It has not been long since he revived the Jordanian parliament which had been frozen since the 1974 Rabat Summit in which the Arab countries recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, despite the opposition of the Jordanian monarch who considers the West Bank part of his kingdom. This parliament was the first practical step towards implementing his 'threat,' and it was viewed by Palestinians as an attempt at circumventing the PLO and its legitimate representation of the Palestinians in the West Bank.

The February 11 Jordanian-Palestinian agreement didn't change the basic attitude of the monarch toward the PLO, and recent developments represented by cool relations between the two sides have proven that he just wants to use the PLO as a Palestinian cover for his negotiations with the US and Israel over the West Bank.

In the last few months, the monarch and Shimon Peres have been courting. The monarch described Peres' peace proposal introduced in the UN General Assembly two months ago as mostly positive. Peres, for his part, said Hussein was the most serious Arab leader "interested in peace." Amidst these flirting remarks the newspapers talk about recent secret meetings between the two sides abroad and the visits of Jordanian delegations to the West Bank. The Israeli press has even published news about an Israeli-Jordanian plan of sharing responsibility for the West Bank.

Whether this news is true or not, there are two things besides the visit of the Jordanian delegations to the West Bank on which these speculations are based. They are the proposal of the improvement of the quality of life, and the appointment of al-Masri as mayor of Nablus. The task of the 'improvement of the quality of life' was assigned to a US-based Jewish-Arab group consisting of businessmen with the support of the American Secretary of State George Shultz. The group declared that among its proposed projects was a cement factory, local bank and a hospital. While local businessmen and elements related to the Jordanian regime welcomed the idea and expressed their support, national forces viewed it as a way of denationalizing the Palestinian population. Jordanian officials have yet to issue any response to this apparently American-Israeli sponsored group which so far has done nothing. The silence of the Jordanian officials and the fact that the Jordanian monarch's father-in-law is a member of this group indicates Jordanian agreement of the group's plan.

But what can be expected from this group which has been assigned the role of fulfilling Israeli and Jordanian plans? Before answering this question, one fact should be emphasized which is that Israeli repressive policies which are directed against the factions which refuse both Israeli and Jordanian control of the occupied territories automatically serve the interests of the Jordanian regime regardless of whether the Israelis intended that or not. The striking of 'extreme elements' intended to smooth the way towards imposing the Israeli plan no doubt has also smoothed the way for pro-Jordanian elements who apparently today are being given a role in Israel's new scheme. This explains implicit Jordanian agreement of the appointment of the millionaire Thafer al-Masri to the Nablus municipality. In fact, he was recently received in Amman. The same thing is also true of the Arab-Jewish businessmen who may view the improvement of the quality of life as in no way connected to repressive Israeli schemes and as isolated from the political question and the general national aspirations of the Palestinian people which are defined in the total termination of occupation and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. In other words, the final objective of the Israeli-American sponsored group is in creating or reinforcing a social sector particularly of pro-Jordanian elements on which the Palestinian population will be forced to become economically dependent.

Some political observers hold that the Jordanian agreement on the recent Israeli step of appointing al-Masri is based on their slogan of 'saving what can be saved.' The Jordanian assumption is that they save now the municipalities and at a later stage suitable conditions may develop which will allow them to negotiate over retaining lands. But these observers doubt this and believe that the Israelis really intend only to change the picture of occupation and not the content by using an Arab cover for that.

The Israelis still refuse to allow democratic municipal elections and continue to interfere in the daily life of the Palestinians. They feel they have found Palestinians who are ready to accept self-determination under the Israeli occupation. They have always wanted municipalities without politics; that is, municipalities which deal only with the daily needs of the population. But this is impossible in view of the fact that almost all aspects of life are controlled by the Israeli occupation authority including agriculture, water, industry, land and development.

Therefore, al-Masri's statement that he will not be involved in politics and will not issue political statements is seen by his critics as either untrue or mere naivete. The Israeli step itself is political and the appointed mayor will be restricted by the policies of the Israeli occupation authorities. He will not be allowed to go beyond the limits of the Israeli plan. The appointment is designed to serve Israeli ends. And even in light of al-Masri's assertion, his participation in the recent meeting held between a US envoy and West Bank personalities in Jerusalem puts his non-political stance in doubt.

But will Israel, which has based its calculations on the split within the PLO, succeed in passing its plan through the Jordanian regime? The Jordanians are also gambling on the weakness of the PLO in reaching their goals in the West Bank. Therefore the cooperation with King Hussein was a big mistake committed by the PLO which must now reassess its entire political option before it is too late. The history of national movements, however, including the Palestinian national movement, teaches us that setbacks are only temporary, and the success or failure of an occupier's plan is determined by the occupied people. ■

Awad Abdel Fattah is a member of Al Fajr's *staff.*

Qaddoumi Must Go

To the Editor:

For a number of years the Foundation for Middle East Peace has sought to promote a better understanding among Americans of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Foundation has emphasized that the conflict is between Israel and the Palestinian people, and it has expressed the view that the PLO as the only body that can speak for the Palestinians is therefore a necessary party to any resolution of the conflict.

In 1979, the Foundation sponsored a public statement by a group of distinguished Americans entitled, "Why Not Talk (to the PLO)?" The Foundation's most recent publication was "Facing the PLO Question" which contained an article by Philip M. Klutznick, Past President of B'nai B'rith International and the World Jewish Congress, entitled "Negotiations with the PLO: When? Now!" as well as an article by former United States Ambassador to Egypt, Hermann F. Eilts, entitled, "It's Time to Talk to the PLO."

Mr. Farouk Qaddoumi, head of the PLO's political department, was recently quoted as still questioning whether *Achille Lauro* passenger Klinghoffer was killed, adding the suggestion that he may have been pushed overboard by his wife.

Mr. Qaddoumi's senseless statement is very harmful to the Palestinian cause. It confirms the worst suspicions and propaganda that Palestinians are an uncouth lot. It is no excuse that Israeli leaders can display racist attitudes and refer to Palestinians as "three-legged animals" or "cockroaches". Having achieved statehood, Israel can be less concerned about the opinion of others. Palestinians have no state of their own, and to get it they need the support of world opinion.

It is not enough that the PLO has the power to block a peaceful settlement. To achieve a dignified and fair settlement for the Palestinian people, its leadership must lead, and that includes conducting itself in a manner that is not offensive to world opinion.

Mr. Qaddoumi is a burden the PLO and the Palestinian people can ill afford. Therefore, it would be in the interest of the Palestinian cause if he were to resign.

Merle Thorpe, Jr.
President of *Foundation for Middle East Peace.*

A home lies in ruins after Israeli soldiers demolished it.

Israel Turns the Screws on Tamra Refugees

by Awad Abdel Fattah

"In 1948, we were uprooted from our villages and now they want to uproot us from here after we have established ourselves... Isn t it enough what they have done to us?" With these bitter words, Ali Omar Ziedani, 68, summed up the problem now facing more than 8000 refugees originating from five neighboring villages since destroyed who now live in Tamra, a village in the western Galilee.

Ziedani, who sat on a mattress beside a fireplace with a traditional coffee pot set on it, said "This room was originally a shack which I set up after the tragedy occurred, but I have renovated it." His grown sons, like the rest of the refugees, have built new houses on the same plot as their father. The plot was purchased from the original residents of Tamra.

Now after the 8000 refugees, who constitute 45 percent of Tamra's population, have purchased land and settled down thus becoming a part of the village, the Israelis want to evacuate them or at least to get them to pay tremendous amounts of money for allegedly living on 'state land'. All those who have built new houses (estimated to be in the hundreds) have been tried and fined on charges of building without construction permits. Yet the problem is not solved and the Israelis insist on their unreasonable conditions, leaving the Tamra refugees to continue to suffer and pay fines. They are facing a situation for which they have no solution.

Tamra Refugee Background

The refugees who live today in Tamra come originally from five village areas — Damoun, Rwees, Hadatha, Mea'ar and Berwe. On the ruins of the last two villages sit today two Israeli kibbutzim. The villages of Mea'ar and Berwe have now been renamed Yasa'ar and Ya'ad.

The 1948 attack by the well-armed Zionist organizations on the Palestinian villages which lacked similar weapons and organization forced the flight of the population. "It was impossible to prevent the occupation of the villages in light of the sharp imbalance" of forces, said one old man who participated in the defense of his village.

Some of the fleeing villagers crossed the borders into other Arab countries and others fled to neighboring villages in the hope that they would return to their villages as soon as the artillery was silent. But this hope turned into a mere dream and they continued to roam the neighboring villages and mountains looking for shelter. In the first two years, the displaced refugees erected tents and some slept out in the open. "Words cannot describe the suffering we have undergone," said Marwan Abu al-Haja, originally from Hadatha.

Finally, they settled down in Tamra, the closest locale to their original village. They rented rooms and lived in very crowded conditions. To accommodate their growing population, the refugees began to move from the rented houses to the western part of the village beginning in 1952. They bought small tracts of land from local landowners and built proper houses.

In the period immediately preceding their move to the western part of Tamra, their lives were initially very difficult. "Until 1965," said Abu al-Haja, "we had to carry water to our homes from a great distance on the backs of donkeys and horses." Neither running water nor electricity were available. Ziedani said that the Israelis didn't provide any help, even though Israel stopped the UN refugee settlement committee's aid in the early 50s by claiming that it would take care of the refugees and integrate them socially and economically into the state's life.

More than 15 years later, specifically in 1966, the refugees who had already succeeded in establishing rudimentary routines in their new neighborhood were surprised to be notified by the Israeli authorities that they would have to evacuate the area under the pretext that they were living on 'state land'. The refugees dismissed this claim as baseless and insisted that they owned the land after having purchased it from the local owners.

Immediately, the refugees initiated the formation of an eight-member committee to meet with Israeli officials. The committee's demand was to return the refugees to their villages. But the meetings didn't bring forth fruit. According to Ziedani, who was head of the committee, the Israeli intention was to force the refugees to give up their claim to their land in their original villages. This was to be in return for the area in which they are living now. The committee members were told that the Israeli government would remove the refugees from Tamra if they didn't agree to sign documents giving up their original lands. In such a situation, the only weapon they had was their refusal of the Israeli conditions. They took their case to court but it remains today unsolved. The case was taken up by the well-known lawyer Hanna Naqara who died two years ago. Since then all court sessions have been postponed.

Despite the case being before the court, the Israeli officer for land administration continued to act without waiting for the court's ruling. It increased pressure on the refugees in an attempt to extract its 'demands'. In 1973, the land administration office divided the designated area into small tracts of land — each one called in Hebrew *Migrash* (half dunum) and classified as 'state land'. Then each refugee family was asked to pay IS40 million (US$27,000) for each *Migrash*. "This is an unreal sum which is only intended to force us to agree to their conditions," said one of the refugees.

Marwan Abu al-Haja said that the Israelis asked him to give up his family's 4000 dunums in his original village in return for permission to keep the one dunum he has already fought for and built on. He refused like the majority of the refugees. All refugees consider the lands on which they are building houses to be their own since they paid for it. But Israeli authorities refuse to admit this. According to Muhammad Kina'an, deputy head of Tamra's local council, the Israelis intend to extend their official control over the lands originally belonging to the refugees, which the Israelis have been cultivating since their seizure of them in 1948. "We wonder," said Kina'an, "how the Israelis can bear to use our land, which they call 'absentee property' despite the fact that the real owners are still in the country living only three kilometers away. At the same time, they ask the refugees to pay for the privilege of living on alleged 'state land'."

Pressure on the refugees has increased since 1980 when new water and electricity regulations went into effect. Those who have built new houses since that date are not allowed to extend electricity and water to their homes. This is besides the heavy fines imposed on them for building without construction permits. "To prevent us from construction means stopping our natural growth. Is this common sense?" asked Hassan Ithman, originally from Damoun, who recently was find IS2 million, (US$1350) and banned from completing the house. "We want to live like human beings. Let them take all our land in Damoun. They have the power," he said.

Scores of houses under construction are now only half completed since their owners have been fined. Whoever violates the no-construction order can be sentenced from three to six months in prison. So far at least three refugees are serving prison terms for violating the order.

The problem continues to tear at the heart of the life of Tamra's refugees. In the light of this, the refugees in coordination with the local council recently began to organize to fight the Israeli scheme. The newly-formed Committee for the Defense of Land and Home, led by the deputy local council head, has organized a series of popular meetings to unify the people. They have also contacted 17 members of the Knesset to debate the issue.

Kina'an said that the committee also plans to organize a demonstration in front of the Knesset and to hold press conferences "to get wider support for the struggle of the village refugees." He added that they believe the state doesn't have any right to the land and that the Israeli scheme is in line with the general policy of stripping the Palestinians in Israel of their lands. "All the refugees are determined not to succumb to the unjust Israeli demand," he said. ■

To Serve or Not To Serve

Palestinian Druze Caught in Controversy Over Israeli Army Draft

by Bahr Ashhab

A Druze soldier teaches in a Daliat al-Karmel classroom. The Israeli Education Ministry recently began a program in which Druze draftees are placed in schools as part of their military service.

Colonial powers which ruled over this part of the world for many years only got their way by fueling local sectarian conflicts and implanting seeds of division in the minds of the locals. Israel is no exception.

When in June of 1956 Israeli politicians announced that Moses had married the daughter of Prophet Shu'aib (*Jethro* whom the Druze recognize as a prophet), and hence all young Palestinian Druze males would serve alongside Jews in the Israeli army, this area became no longer a sane place to live. The term 'divide and rule,' was no longer merely a cliche.

Yosef Munir is a Druze from al-Maghar village. He told this story in Arabic:

"I was 18 years old then. You know, at that age you are somewhat ignorant of the complexities of the world around you. But I was a hard worker. I'd get up at five in the morning and go down to the fields tending the land and picking olives. What else would a boy like me do? And one day a letter from the government came to my house. You know what it was? A draft notice. They said that I had to go to the army office in Kufr Yasif and take my ID and all.

"My father took me there the next morning and asked what was wrong. You know he thought that I had bothered the Israeli army or something. He was a religious man and was really afraid of the Israelis. He told me that if they came and demolished our house because of me that I would pay for it dearly.

"The army man told my father that I would join the 'defense forces' and I would have to be ready in three weeks. You know my father sighed with relief that our house would not be demolished, but he thought that the man must have made a dreadful mistake. He told him that he was mistaken in that I was not Jewish and thus could not fight in the Israeli army. He told them that maybe it was because my name is Yosef that they thought I was Jewish. He tried to say all that in his broken Hebrew and I don't know if the soldier understood, because he asked my father to speak in Arabic. 'You mean you are Arab?' my father shouted at the man. 'Then how come you can't distinguish between an Arab and a Jew? We are Arabs,' he said.

Druze villager Yosef Munir.

"I don't think that any of us really realized what we were ordered to do."

"The soldier asked my father to calm down, although you could notice that he himself was getting upset. 'It is not a mistake, I assure you,' the soldier whispered to my father. 'You see, I am a Druze, too, and I am in the army. In fact, I've been in it for four years already.' My father looked like he had seen the angel of death. I've never seen him so distressed. 'My son will never join the Jews,' he said as he stared down at the floor.

"The man asked me to show my ID and I did. He looked inside it and gave it back to me. He told my father that he should take me to the offices of the Interior Ministry in Tiberias the next day and give them my ID, and then bring it back to him when we returned. My father asked him to tell him what was going on but he shouted at us 'Just do as I tell you. *Yallah*, Go.. Go.'

"We rushed back to the village and as soon as we arrived my father went to the village *mukhtar* and told him what had happened. He returned two hours later and his mood was very dark, you know. He went over to my mother and told her that I would have to go to the army for two-and-a-half years. She panicked. I ran out of the house to tell my friend about it and also to escape my mother's wailing.

"All my buddies from high school were gathered at my friend Majid's house. You see, that house over there with the pigeon house on top. Yes, that is it. They all had army letters in their hands. Majid was trying to quieten them down for they were all talking loudly and at the same time. No one even noticed that I came in. I took one of the boys aside and asked him to tell me what was going on about these letters. He was surprised that I did not know yet that the Jews were enlisting all 18-year-old Druze in their army. 'Two-years-and-a-half,' he told me. 'Maybe because of this war with the Egyptians,' he said. You know the Jews and 'el-Inglis' were attacking Egypt then.

"I could not sleep that night. I didn't know what was going to happen to me, I couldn't believe that they were going to put me in the army. It meant I could have a gun and a military uniform and maybe drive a jeep. I didn't know whether to be happy or worried.

"The next day my father and I went to Tiberias and went up to the Interior Ministry. Someone took my ID and went away for half an hour and came back. He gave it to my father and told him that his son was a 'true Druze now.' My father asked hi.. 'how come?' The man told him to look inside my ID and see that the word 'Arab' was erased and replaced by the word 'Druze'. My father said, 'There is no power, no strength but in God.' Then we went to the army officer and after two weeks, they gave me the gun and the uniform and took me in a truck down south to the Naqab desert.

"They trained us there for three months. We were all Druze. I mean, only the top officers were Jews. They showed us how to use automatic guns and how to plant road mines and stuff. They also gave us many lectures on the Druze and Jewish religions and the connection between them. In the first lecture, I remember, the Jewish officer told us that Prophet Moses once married the daughter of our Prophet Shu'aib — may Allah gladden his breast — and hence we were tied by blood to the Jews and had to help them defend this country. He told us that the government chose us from all the other Arabs because we were good people.

"We had to do a lot of things afterwards. We went on patrols and so on. Well, we did have to you know, harass the Beduins down there. We were told to go to where the Beduins live and tell them to go to Jordan. We used to drive behind them until they crossed the border. We also shot over their heads to speed them on. Then we had to patrol the same area for five or six days to make sure they didn't come back. They told us to shoot at anyone who tried to cross back into the desert. We used to also shoot refugees who tried to sneak back across the Egyptian border.

"You know, they gave us a lot of filthy work to do. Sometimes when I think about it, I get very angry. We had to break into homes and drag out all male residents of the house, and beat up on them in front of everyone else. And if anyone resisted, we used to take him back with us to the camp and beat him some more. We took many to the border and shot at them until they disappeared in Jordan. But what could you do when your officer ordered you to do these things? You couldn't disobey. They told us that Beduins were very dirty people and that they hated us because we were different Muslims, you know. I don't think that any of us really realized what we were ordered to do.

"They released me in 1969 and I went back home. Everybody was glad to see me back alive, but they seemed angry and also suspicious of me. I told them little of what went on in the Naqab desert and life went on. I got married and now have five male children. I worked in construction all the time. You see that red roofed building over there? That is an Israeli settlement that I helped build. It is funny that I am not allowed to enter it ever since the Jews moved in.

"You want to hear something that is even worse? My eldest son, Munir, turned 18 last month and they sent him a draft notice. They say he received it, took off and I haven't seen him since. I checked with the army, but they told me he didn't show up. He will go to jail if they catch him.

"Before he left, you know what he told me? 'Dad, I don't want to have to do what you did. I can't ever become a traitor.' "

Yosef told me this story as we stood in front of the Sultan Basha statue in the center of the Druze neighborhood in al-Maghar. Down below, the green fields testified to the truth of the man's story. Israeli settlers could be seen working on the lands. "You know, my father owned 25 dunums down there. They took them, too. Did it matter that I served in their army? Not a bit."

* * *

Palestinians in the Israeli army

Two weeks ago, a Palestinian group primarily made up of Druze intellectuals calling themselves the Druze Initiative Committee announced that the upcoming year is designated as the year to fight compulsory service in the Israeli army. They said that 30 years of Israeli attempts at mutilating their culture and separating them from the rest of the Palestinian communities must stop.

It was 30 years ago that Israeli policy makers forced young Druze males to enlist in the Israeli army. They placed them alongside Jews, and pitted them against fellow Arabs in 1956, 1967, 1973 and even against their co-religionists — the Lebanese Druze — in 1982. In between these wars, the Israelis put the Druze to tasks that not only contradicted their nationalist values but simple human dignity as well. In addition to what Yosef and his comrades were ordered to do, other Druze were stationed in the West Bank and Gaza where they carried out campaigns of terror and oppression on behalf of Israel.

They were sent to quell student demonstrations, women's sit-ins and al-Aqsa Mosque protests. Those who maintained their loyalty to Israel were given senior posts in the military establishment in the occupied territories and were allowed to manage business and education affairs for the Palestinians.

The burden was, however, far too heavy for many Druze who, as time progressed, became more aware of the catastrophe that had befallen their community the minute it was used to carry out Zionist schemes. Some began to oppose Israeli planners and Druze elders whom they partly blamed for their ordeal. In 1972, they formed the DIC to primarily fight the draft, and to demand better living conditions for the 60,000-strong Druze community. They also worked to re-establish ties with the rest of the Palestinians. The DIC became strong advocates for the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.

Druze Identity

The Druze are Muslims who adopted several traditions that did not contradict the Islamic faith but merely made them unique in the same manner as the Shi'ites, the Sunnis and the Isma'ilis. They perform their prayers to Allah in the same manner as every other Muslim and they celebrate all Muslim feasts with as much piety and respect. What differs, however, is their certain secretive traditions which have their roots in the 11th century with the Isma'iliya rulers of Egypt (the Fatimid dynasty). This dynasty was itself an offshoot of Shi'ism. Scholarly evidence indicates that their tradition is also influenced by Christianity, Hellenism, neo-Platonism and other sources. Their uniqueness is reinforced by the prohibition of marriage outside the sect, insistence on being born a Druze and the impossibility of conversion, and restraint from proselytizing.

Today there are some 600,000 Druze throughout the world. Most live in the mountainous regions of Lebanon (Shouf mountains), Syria (the Golan Heights) and Palestine (Karmel mountain). In Palestine, 60,000 Druze are scattered in 16 villages in the Galilee. Eight of these villages are exclusively Druze, the other 10 are shared with Christians and mostly Sunni Muslims.

The Druze were initially a farming community which owned and cultivated a good percentage of Palestinian lands. 1948 was, however, a turning point for them. Since then, a great deal of Druze land has been confiscated and turned into state land which was later used for Jewish settlements or became grounds for army training. Daliat al-Karmel, a large exclusively Druze village near Haifa, had 35,000 dunums in 1948 but now has a mere 18,000. Pat McDonell of the monthly *Middle East* magazine wrote in July 1982 that as a result of the deprivation by Israel of Druze lands, the Druze "have become laborers, factory workers, professionals and academics as well as soldiers, policemen and members of the border police. This has stimulated political debate about their identity and allegiance."

This debate is apparently what triggered the formation of the DIC in 1972. Its leader *Sheikh* Jamal Miadi said last week that some 40 percent of Palestinian Druze support his movement. He said that in 1983 alone some 600 Druze youths refused the draft, despite the harsh punishment that Israeli courts imposed upon them. The number of refuseniks this year may yet be higher as youths became more politically aware and "as a result of recent Israeli atrocities in Lebanon where we were face to face with our Druze and Palestinian brethren who fought on the other side. Kids today will not accept repetitions of what happened to their elders," he said.

The Lebanon war and the annexation by Israel of the Golan Heights a year earlier were two major turning points in the Israeli-Druze relationship. The story of the Golan Heights Druze was best illustrated by R. Scott Kennedy in his booklet, *The Druze of the Golan: A Case of Non-Violent Resistance*. He wrote: "In a sharp departure from parliamentary practice, Begin's ruling Likud coalition forced through the requisite three readings and final passage of legislation formally annexing the Golan to Israel, on December 14, 1981. The unprecedented speed with which the legislation was passed prevented debate and disallowed any organized opposition. This was criticized by many members of the opposition Labor Party [which first introduced compulsory service for the Druze in Palestine — ed.] as a further eroding of democratic practices in Israel. The annexation abrogated Syrian sovereignty over the region, denied the national self-identification of the people living there, and defied the declared American policy, if not its tacit support of Israeli actions, and the nearly unanimous opinion of other co. tries that Israel controls the occupied territories only temporarily as a trust."

The Druze were then told to take Israeli citizenship, but most refused. They began a long strike and boycott of all involvement with any Druze who took Israeli nationality.

Kennedy then explained how the action of the Golani Druze helped to awaken awareness among the Palestinian Druze. He writes: "The Golani Druze benefited from the unique position of the Israeli Druze as well. In some respects, they enjoy certain privileges, but most importantly they serve in the Israeli army. The Israeli Druze raised public expression of solidarity with their Golani co-religionists. At one point an annual military parade through the Israeli Druze villages on Mount Karmel near Haifa was cancelled because of planned boycotts in solidarity with the Druze of the Golan. As Israeli officials anticipated the invasion of Lebanon, involving Israeli Druze soldiers and certain to involve Lebanese Druze in some manner, pressure to defuse the crisis in the Golan would have grown stronger.

A Druze demonstration in Majdal Shams at the height of the Golani Druze revolt.

"Israel clearly feared alienating the Israeli Druze. Even though some Israeli Druze think the support was sentimental and sectarian rather than political, there is concern in Israel about a growing tendency among Israeli Druze to identify with the Palestinian cause, even to the point of refusing military service."

A Druze Awakening

Many of the soldiers who carried out Israeli orders in the Golan were Palestinian Druze. They went back home with stories to tell and their families were infuriated. Druze leaders issued many communiques in which they urged the Israeli government to lessen its tight grip on the Golani Druze. Many of them were related through marriage and other family ties. Many ordered their young men to avoid the draft.

Then came the Lebanon war. The Druze in the Shouf mountains were strong allies of the Palestinians and other progressive forces who fought against the advancing Israeli troops. Many of them fell as a result of this allegiance. Druze soldiers in the Israeli army found themselves in a dilemma that they found too self-destructive to deal with. Hundreds of them deserted the invading army and joined the Lebanese Druze in the Shouf, others defied orders and stayed home and thus were imprisoned in Israeli jails. The massacres in Sabra and Shatila and the subsequent siege by Phalangist and Israeli forces of the Shouf mountains in 1983 sent shock waves through the Druze community in Palestine. Even the most cooperative of them, spiritual leader Amin Tarif and former member of Knesset Zeidan Atsha, came out with strong criticism of the Israeli government. The two men warned the Israeli government that Palestinian Druze would cross the Israeli-Lebanese border to fight along the Shouf Druze even if it meant collective punishment to their community. This provoked Israeli politicians to urge the government to punish the two men on charges of incitement. Jewish clergy also joined the call. In December 1984, Rabbi Tsvi Vienman, a top religious legislator, wrote to Shimon Peres urging him to "take *Sheikh* Amin Tarif to disciplinary court for involving himself in political activities." (*Jerusalem Post*, January 9, 1985.)

The Druze held several protest activities throughout the war. On one occasion in November 1983, over 1000 gathered in front of the American Embassy in Tel Aviv and called on the US to pressure Israel into ending the war and relieving their Druze relatives in Lebanon. The demonstration which followed the news of the death of 13 Druze soldiers by a suicide bomber while they were at the Israeli army headquarters in Tyre, alarmed Israeli politicians who feared that the Druze were getting out of hand.

Several Israeli politicians, including Shimon Peres himself, summoned Druze leaders and warned them not to carry out further protest actions. They also tried to convince these leaders to support their policies in Lebanon and even to call on Lebanese Druze to cooperate with the invasion forces. The leaders (known as the traditional leadership headed by *Sheikh* Tarif) cooperated. *Sheikh* Tarif had held a coffee strike for six months in protest of Israeli actions in Lebanon, but when Ori Litani, who coordinated Israeli army activities in Lebanon, visited the holy man, *Sheikh* Tarif issued a communique to the Lebanese Druze emphasizing the "unquestionable loyalty of Israeli Druze to our country Israel." Earlier during the invasion, Israeli politicians used *Sheikh* Tarif to channel messages to Lebanese Druze especially during their opposition to the "peace talks" between the Israeli government and Lebanese Phalangists of Bashir Gemayel. After a visit by the Israeli Director of the Prime Minister's office, Mattiyahu Shmoelivitch, on May 19, 1983, *Sheikh* Tarif issued the following statement: "Total opposition to the (peace) plan will not serve the interests of the Lebanese Druze community or of the Israeli Druze, but it will endanger their future." This, however, had little effect on the attitude towards the plan by Lebanese Druze leaders.

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DRUZE YOUTH. WILL THEIR FUTURE CONTINUE TO HANG IN THE BALANCE OF THE ISRAELI ARMY DRAFT?

Land Fraud Case Threatens to Bury Herut Henchmen

by Ayal Ehrlich/*Koteret Rashit*

So long as it was Avraham Gindi that was being held in detention, the public looked upon the whole affair as a financial scandal: a big contractor, whose brothers had fled abroad in fear of the investigation, was suspected of selling land plots under false pretenses... But when [on December 4] Avi Tzur was arrested, overnight the affair became the political smash hit of the season.

Tzur was an aide to Micha'el Dekel when the latter served as deputy minister of agriculture under Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir. Another one of Dekel's aides, Claude Malka, was also arrested and subsequently released. Tzur and Malka are members of the Herut Central Committee. Dekel is one of Yitzhak Shamir's two henchmen in the party. The police suspect West Bank dealer Ahmed Odeh, building magnate Avraham Gindi, and others of transferring tens of thousands of dollars to Tzur to finance Herut propaganda in the last elections. They further suspect Tzur of having siphoned off some of the money

Ahmed Odeh

for himself before turning it over to the party. In exchange, Tzur gave Gindi letters signed by the deputy minister's office which attested that the establishment of a [residential] villa settlement had been authorized [by the government].

The threat of being embroiled in a bribery case threw the Shamir camp into a panic and heated things up in the other Likud factions. They didn't defend Tzur's good name, nor the good name of the party for that matter. They acted like men out to protect themselves.

Tzur, 36, will find it difficult to emerge from this affair as a hero. Tall, giving off an air of authority, Tzur has served in a number of roles in his short career that were too big for him. He was born in Haifa to one of the local fire chiefs. In the army he served in the paratroopers and climbed to the rank of sergeant before his release. In the reserves, he made lieutenant colonel. Immediately after his release from the army, he got married and found an administrative job in the Co-Op [supermarket] chain. After a while he decided to go into business for himself. He was modestly successful in a number of enterprises; he was a joint owner of a restaurant beside the Elite factory, he worked in insurance, and he was a partner in a shoe factory in Jaffa. In 1976 he joined Ariel Sharon's recently formed "Shlomzion" movement.

Sharon won two seats in the elections and was immediately co-opted into the Herut movement. And Tzur went along with him. He registered himself in the Holon party branch of the Herut.

In August 1980 he began work in the Ministry of Agriculture. Sharon was still minister of agriculture at the time. Tzur found a champion in attorney Tzvi Nagler, one of the senior members of the Holon branch of Herut — who is considered a Dekel loyalist. When Dekel was appointed deputy minister and needed an aide, Nagler recommended Tzur. That's how Tzur came to work at the ministry. Thanks to his job, Tzur acquired a feeling of power. "His role as a ministerial aide gave him the feeling that he was a star," say the branch members. "He tried to dictate to us but in the end we saw that he wasn't all he claimed to be."

Tzur began his job at the height of an internal struggle in the Herut movement in which West Bank settlement figured prominently. Three different government ministries — defense, agriculture and housing — not to speak of the settlement department of the Jewish Agency (all four of which were controlled by the Likud) — were competing among themselves over which one would settle more people on the West Bank and reap the political rewards for doing so. Sharon turned his post in the Ministry of Agriculture over to the late Simcha Ehrlich when he became defense minister. But he continued to deal with settlement through his aide at the Ministry of Agriculture, Uri Bar-On. At the same time, David Levy was energetically working to establish urban settlements on the West Bank under the wing of the Housing Ministry. The Ministry of Agriculture's hopes were focused on residential settlements...

Until 1979 private individuals in Israel could not buy land in the occupied territories. Settlement was totally under the institutional control of the Jewish Agency and the Ministry of Housing. It was Moshe Dayan who convinced the Begin government to allow any Israeli who so desired to purchase land in the occupied territories. The government didn't realize what it was letting itself in for. A whole industry of forged documents, bribery and violent coercion sprouted up and worked to corrupt the West Bank military government as well as the social and economic system there. Arab landowners resisted selling land to Jews. A whole business was set up incorporating Arab land dealers [who acted as middlemen]. Sometimes a plot of land would change hands three or four times before getting to the purchaser, and even then it was never clear whether the last seller was the real owner of the plot.

In addition to the purchase of land, every entrepreneur had to get permission from the ministerial settlement committee to settle the land they had bought. In at least one instance, regarding a settlement by the name of *Kramim*, Tzur is suspected of giving the Gindi brothers a "letter of intent" (signed by Tzur) which claimed that all the authorizations for the establishment of a settlement there had been given. Making use of these letters, the Gindi brothers sold hundreds of plots.

The police suspect that in exchange for the "letter of intent" Tzur received US$60,000, part of which he turned over to the Herut movement to fund the "We are Continuing" project — a series of tours on the West Bank the Herut movement organized on the eve of the elections. Micha'el Dekel was in charge of this project.

While being taken to detention this week, Tzur told a throng of newsmen that his boss, Micha'el Dekel, knew about the letters he had sent, including the fake authorization for setting up settlements. Dekel has refused to comment. Even if Dekel knew about the letters, that alone is not enough to prove that he had knowledge about the bribery cases the police are presently investigating.

Dekel has been a Herut hack since his youth. He is certain to be interrogated by the police in the next few days. People who know Dekel well do not rule out the possibility that he supervised the "We are Continuing" election campaign without knowing where the funds were coming from.

Shamir's other top henchman, Deputy Foreign Minister Roni Milo, reacted to the police investigation by launching a hysterical public crusade against the police, claiming that it wasn't investigating complaints about the Labor Alignment and that the present investigation is being pursued to undermine settlement in the occupied territories and smear the Likud. Milo has not been mentioned as being a party to the affair, yet the law firm of which he's a partner was involved in drawing up contracts for a number of settlement enterprises which are now being investigated — primarily in regard to the illegal acquisition of land. Milo's legal partner is Claude Malka's lawyer.

On Friday [December 6] when Milo visited the Petah Tikva police station to lodge a complaint about criminal activities he claimed to have discovered among Labor Alignment men, police officers introduced him to a man he didn't recognize. Later it turned out that the man was Ahmed Odeh, whose testimony is serving as the basis for the case against Gindi and Tzur. Had Milo recognized the man, the police would have shown a great deal of interest. But he acted as though he didn't recognize him.

The land swindle in the occupied territories occurred at two stages of the process. At the first stage, it involved forged documents claiming ownership of land. The police now have a great deal of evidence about the forgery of land deeds. Citizen Rights Movement Secretary General Dedi Tzucker did part of the spade work for the police along with writer-investigator Matti Gilat. Likewise, lawyers representing villages whose land was stolen have lodged complaints. The second swindle was in the sale of plots under false pretenses.

The state was supposed to finance what is called "the primary infrastructure," i.e., access roads, electricity and water link, etc. By means of this clause, Dekel acquired budget funds for his settlement activities. The principal result of this activity was the automatic jacking up of land prices, the disruption of all planning, and the general corruption of the system.

The "letter of intent" Avi Tzur distributed on behalf of Dekel bypassed not only the ministerial committee. Before being approved by the committee, every settlement must be assessed by Plia Albeck of the Justice Ministry who checks whether the land was purchased in a legal manner. Without a check of this kind it would have been easy to operate a swindle. Albeck spoke out against Dekel's letters of intent back in 1983. She demanded that he refrain from misleading the public. But her words had no effect. Likewise, the government legal adviser's July 29 (1983) letter to the police recommending an investigation did not bear fruit.

This week the Likud leadership attacked the police for the zeal it has displayed in investigating the case. Yet the facts present a totally different picture. Like other affairs open to

Micha'el Dekel

political pressure, in this affair the police acted hesitantly and slowly. Instead of beginning to investigate in July 1983, immediately after receiving the government legal adviser's letter, Chief-Investigator Karti and his men decided to wait. It wasn't until last year that they decided to investigate. For some reason, they transferred the file to the serious crimes squad rather than the fraud unit. A team was set up to investigate land fraud under Superintendent Isidor Solok — an officer with a reputation for apprehending drug dealers.

On February 26, MK Mordechai Virshuvski questioned Police Minister Haim Bar-Lev about whether or not lack of manpower was holding up the investigation. Bar-Lev replied in the negative. But the investigation didn't get under way till August. A few weeks went by and then the Tel Aviv police arrested three men suspected of trafficking in drugs. Forged power-of-attorney statements were found in their possession. "We're not guilty," cried the suspects. "It's Ahmed Odeh." And that's how the police got to the key witness in the land affair.

Whether under threat of pressure or for some other reason, the police superintendent announced that the file had been turned over to the prosecutor's office, even though the investigation has not yet been completed. By doing this, the police have made the government legal adviser the focus of political pressure. What's clear is that the file won't be easily buried. (Translation: Ayal Ehrlich, *Koteret Rashit*, December 11, 1985.)

A traditionally decorated Palestinian bedroom.

In Bethlehem

Folklore Museum Highlights Turn-of-the-Century Culture

by Sami al-Aboudi

As ancient Bethlehem houses and the traditional way of life crumble under the hammer of modernization, we are threatened with the extinction of work of generations — what has become known as Palestinian culture and heritage. This creeping threat, more real in light of the increasing destruction of old houses to make way for new ones, the discarding of old cooking utensils to replace them with modern glass or pressure cookers and the vanishing lifestyle, was the moving force behind the establishment of the Bethlehem Folklore Museum 13 years ago. "We know how our ancestors lived but the next generation knows nothing about it," said Victoria Canawati, secretary of the Arab Women's Union in Bethlehem which founded the museum.

The museum, the only exhibition of traditional household items and clothing which reflect the lifestyle in the occupied territories, is one of the major achievements of the Arab Women's Union in Bethlehem. In fact, despite the fact that it sustains financial losses in running the museum, the union recently hired a receptionist to guide visitors through the three museum sections. Moreover, the museum sponsors are working towards expanding the place to reflect all aspects of traditional Palestinian life.

The building housing the museum is original Arab architecture with arched doors and ceiling, thus making it as close as possible to a real house of the early 1900s. The museum contains room displays as well as a traditional kitchen. Another section includes the display of unique Bethlehem dresses and jewelry. Organizers also made excellent use of old pictures to illustrate life 50 to 80 years ago.

The museum is on the ground floor of a traditional Arab house near the historical Church of Nativity in Manger Square. Entering through an arched door, a visitor descends several steps into the low-roofed exhibition halls. Pictures of women wearing traditional Bethlehem clothes line the stairwell and wine jars made of clay or glass are also displayed in small niches in the stairway wall. At the bottom, a hand-made doll wearing the traditional *Malak* dress is exhibited in a small wall closet with a glass door.

The most elegant part of the museum is the clothes and jewelry showroom on the left side of the stairway. This section was remodeled and arranged in 1983 by a French specialist, Anne Saurte, at the request of the Arab Women's Union. In the center of the small room, a life-sized pair of dolls wearing traditional Bethlehem clothes is displayed in a glass case. The woman is wearing a complete bridal outfit consisting of a *Malak* robe, a *Shatweh* (a headdress) and a *Tarbi'a* (a veil worn over the *Shatweh*). The *Shatweh* is composed of several layers of embroidered material. Coral beads and golden and silver coins cover the front section.

Unlike women in neighboring villages and towns like Beit Sahur, Bethlehem women wore the *Shatweh* only after they were married, Victoria Canawati said. Before marriage women only wore the *Tarbi'a* over a bare head. Bethlehem area dresses were also made differently from those in other parts of Palestine. The dress sleeves, for instance, are shaped like a kimono, unlike dresses in the Ramallah area which have regular straight sleeves. The striped orange and brown dresses, in fact, are completely different from those in the Ramallah area, which were generally black and white. The *Shatweh* also is different. In Bethlehem, the *Shatweh* is more like a cone, while in the Ramallah area it is more of a hat with a large brim, especially in the back.

The different pieces of the bridal outfit are exhibited in separate glass closets around the room, with explanatory statements in Arabic, English and French attached.

A pair of red shoes, a replica of the old-fashioned footwear made at the turn of the century was made especially for the museum by a local shoemaker. Leonie Rock, one of the founders of the museum, said they asked an elderly shoemaker who used to make these kind of shoes in the early 30s to fashion a pair for the museum after they lost hope of finding an original pair.

The clothes showroom contains a display of rare jewelry, consisting mainly of silver bracelets and earrings. A unique silver necklace with silver chains and coins known as *Zinaq* is also on display. The *Zinaq* disappeared from Palestine a long time ago.

From the outer showrooms, one enters through a small arched door into a long, low-roofed hall. In the hall with stone facing, two separate living rooms reflecting two different periods of Palestinian history are neatly arranged. The outer one pictures the traditional Arab living room furnished with mattresses on the carpet-covered floor. A wood burning stove used for heating as well as making Arabic coffee is placed in front of the mattress on which the head of the household sits. Next to it, a coffee grinding pot known as a *Mihbash*, is also placed within reach of the household head. The *Mihbash* consists of a heavy wooden pot with a small hole, and a separate long, rounded piece of wood that fits through the hole.

Arabs developed a special musical rhythm while grinding coffee using the *Mihbash*. A number of Eastern musical instruments, like the traditional Arab *Oud* (lute), a *Rababa*, (a one-string fiddle) a *Tableh* (a drum) and a *Shababeh* (a flute) are used to reproduce that rhythm.

On the walls, unique pictures of Bethlehem personalities — some taken with governmental officials dating back to the beginning of this century — are displayed. The oldest picture dates back to 1898 where a number of Bethlehem dignitaries assembled in front of the Turkish government building in the city. Another picture marked the opening of the Bethlehem market in 1929, with the then Palestinian leader Haj Amin al-Husseini; the mayor of Jerusalem, Ragheb al-Nashashibi; and the mayor of Bethlehem, Nicola Shahin.

The inner living room consists of a wooden bench covered with a mattress and two tall wooden tables known as *Iskamleh*. An old swinging bed for children is also on display. The traditional copper *Kanoon* and coffee pot as well as wine jars which were used until the late 1930s or even 40s are also on exhibit. A wooden chest painted green stands in one corner and was used as a bridal chest. It was originally inlaid with mother of pearl pieces and was most likely imported from Syria.

A drawing of Bethlehem women wearing the traditional Palestinian dresses.

A close look at the embroidery on a Bethlehem dress.

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The aborted visit by Palestinian personalities to Amman, the elections in local universities and the West Bank land scandal were among the top stories covered by the local press this week. In addition, *Al Quds* ran a lead story December 18 in which it asserted that the PLO intends to accept UN Resolution 242 in return for a guaranteed seat at an international conference on the Middle East conflict. *Al Fajr* gave its main story December 16 to the meeting between Palestinian figures and a high-ranking British diplomat.

Points of Agreement and Disagreement

Abd al-Rauf al-Kasim's visit to Jordan falls within the context of Arab solidarity backed by the PLO. Out of this perception, the PLO devotes its efforts to support and consolidate the Amman agreement on one hand, and its insistence on Egypt's return to the Arab fold on the other. Qaddoumi praised the distinguished Palestinian-Jordanian relations and stressed the inevitability of Egypt's return. Egypt of course is also interested in a dignified return. It declared its readiness to establish relations with Syria. Will Syria reciprocate at this critical stage? Many questions present themselves. But they are not intended to test Syria's will or conviction. We'd like to stress the fact that there are many points of agreement between Syria and Egypt, Iraq and the PLO. For example, there is an Arab consensus on the Fez plan. We hope that these points of agreement will help in overcoming the differences.

AL FAJR
December 12

Taba Problem... The Main Cause

The talks on Taba did not achieve any progress, despite the diplomatic terms asserting otherwise. The Taba talks are connected with international efforts and mediations to normalize the Egyptian-Israeli relations. The talks on Taba are part of the whole peace process in the area, so these talks will affect the peace process itself. Should these talks fail, Egypt will resort to a hard line because it will discover that Israel is unwilling to give up a small enclave of land, let alone vast areas of the occupied Arab territories in the West Bank and Gaza. The failure of Taba talks will cast doubt over Israel's serious intentions toward peace. The question now is not when or where Taba talks will take place. It is the issue of the fruitfulness of direct negotiations called for by Israel and the US as the only way to solve the Middle East conflict. For, if the talks on Taba have been going on for three years, how long will negotiations for a peaceful settlement in the area take just to get them to the point where Taba talks have reached?

AL QUDS
December 13

The Teacher's Day

The land has a day, the human rights have a day, the workers have a day to be marked. The teacher, therefore, should have a day on which he/she should be remembered and honored. All nations agree on the importance of the teacher's role in building up future generations. We seize this opportunity to urge all those responsible to give teachers recognition of their difficult work. It is not a secret that teachers are living through very difficult conditions. Jordan is not exempt from the responsibility for improving the lot of the teacher in the West Bank and Gaza.

AL FAJR
December 14

Posthumous Certificate

Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres admitted that autonomy envisaged by the Camp David accords had died. Peres was late in signing the death certificate of a still-born plan. But the issue now is that Peres and his government do not want to learn the lesson. They still put forward plans whose lot is no better than that of the late plan. The autonomy plan died because it ignored the core of the problem, that is, the recognition of Palestinian legitimate rights. It died because it was formulated in the absence of the people. The plan was still-born because the planners tried to circumvent Palestinian rights and to force it on the Palestinian people.

AL SHA'AB
December 16

Peace and Obstacles

A Palestinian delegation was supposed to leave for Amman December 15 to consult with Yasser Arafat and the PLO Executive Committee, but the Israeli authorities prevented the delegation from leaving. The delegation intended to discuss means of advancing the peace process. The Israelis' refusal to allow the delegation to travel indicates that Israeli policy makers are still seeking peace in their own way. With the backing of the US, Israel's insistence on ignoring the PLO necessarily means ignoring Palestinian rights, something which leads the area to further disasters. Israel refused the Fez resolutions, the Amman agreement and now it refuses the principle of consultation between the Palestinian leadership and the residents of the occupied territories. After all this, the decision-makers in Israel talk about peace but their actions are leading the Middle East in the opposite direction of peace. Those who really wish for peace should not place obstacles in the way of peace. We have to expect the same from Israel and the US.

AL QUDS
December 16

Hands off Dheisheh camp!

The Other Side of the Picture

In an interview with a Kuwaiti paper, President Mubarak of Egypt reiterated his call for Yasser Arafat to accept 242 and 338. Mubarak was joined by others also. Observers would imagine that a peaceful solution is just within our grasp, if only the PLO chairman would utter these words of acceptance. But let's refresh our memories so that we may not forget. Let's recall what was said in the 17th PNC session held in Amman.

King Hussein addressed the PNC by saying frankly that he had nothing to offer the Palestinian people except a political solution based on 242 and 338 which calls for negotiations with Israel under an international umbrella. If this attitude is acceptable to the Palestinian people, then he [the king] would work with the Palestinian leadership. The king stressed to the PNC members that they should carefully study the offer freely and frankly. If not, then the Palestinians were to shoulder the responsibility and he would offer any backing and support.

So, the PLO made a decision after considerable study and debate. Yasser Arafat came to Amman and signed the Amman agreement with King Hussein. The two sides agreed to work together on the principle of land for peace. This clearly means that the PLO accepts the two resolutions and accepts the political solution. Hussein took the agreement to Washington believing that he had achieved a lot. But Hussein came back greatly disappointed because Washington did not receive the agreement as it should have. Instead of venting their anger on the US, the Arabs began to blame the PLO because it did not take off all its clothes and creep feebly naked.

Even if the PLO responded, what would be the price? The answer... it is up to your skill in the negotiations. And negotiations with whom? Is there a government in Israel that is qualified and ready to negotiate and has the courage to pay the price for peace? We realize that the Israeli government which is unable to solve the Taba problem is too weak to solve the problem of the occupied territories. And even if elections were held in Israel, how can we know that the peace group would win? The problem lies with Israel and the US. As for the PLO, it constitutes no obstacle at all.

AL QUDS
December 17

West Bank teachers crammed into the Beit Hanina Professional Unions Complex in celebration of Palestine Teacher's Day December 14./AO Photo.

Educators Commemorate Teacher's Day

In a rare appearance of late, the elected-but-dismissed mayor of Nablus Bassam Shaka'a recognized Palestinian teachers December 14 at a special festival held in their honor.

Hundreds of teachers from all over the occupied territories representing various educational institutions gathered at the Professional Unions Complex in Jerusalem to celebrate the third annual Teacher's Day. The festival was sponsored by the Union of Workers in the Education Sectors in the Occupied Territories and was also attended by several prominent Palestinian figures.

In his remarks, Shaka'a commended the teachers in their steadfast struggle to provide an education for the Palestinian generations despite the many obstacles. Several veteran teachers were recognized for their years of service. Shaka'a presented each with a plaque and thanked each for his or her efforts and sacrifice. Some of the plaques were awarded posthumously.

Both Anton Atallah and Butros Maklouf, now deceased, were recognized. Both had taught in private schools in Jerusalem. Among many others honored were Bir Zeit Professor Khalil Rishmawi, Beit Sahur teacher Yacoub al-Shomali and government school teacher Atallah Alawi from Dhariyeh. Retired al-Bireh teacher Fadel Rimawi was recognized for his teaching and his work on behalf of the General Committee of Government School Teachers. Also recognized was Bani Na'im teacher Mahmoud Ida'is, who was just recently deported to Jordan.

At the beginning of the celebration, attendants stood for a minute of silent respect in memory of the Palestinian martyrs. Speeches were then delivered by representatives of teachers, unions and institutions. Speakers outlined the problems facing Palestinian teachers and education under occupation. These include: low salaries far below the poverty line, harassment measures by the Israeli authorities against teachers, unjustified dismissals, transfers of teachers to remote schools, threats against teachers and detentions of active teachers.

Many speakers also decried the lack of any social and health insurance. Others spoke out against unjustified interference by the authorities in the process of education including prohibition of thousands of books, the cancellation of subjects related to the Palestinian cause and the alteration of textbook and classroom maps.

Speakers also stressed the right of teachers to their own union, a right the Israeli authorities deny. In addition, some speakers defended the right of students to their own elected councils. Attempts by some administrations to deny students these rights was condemned. Other speakers also stressed the determination of the Palestinian people to achieve self-determination and an independent state under the leadership of a unified PLO.

A published statement by the union of private school teachers in Ramallah was read and distributed at the festival. In its editorial, the union said the teachers' struggle is meant to secure the basic necessities of life which the teachers have not had for a long time.

Scores of cables were sent to the festival from various unions and institutions in the occupied territories.

To our readers:

In this final issue of 1985, we would like to report the results of the questionnaire which was distributed last summer. We are grateful to everyone who responded and encourage all our readers to continue giving us feedback about *Al Fajr* English Weekly.

Most of the respondents wrote from the US (67%) and Palestine/Israel (10%). A few wrote from Canada (7%), Australia (2%), Saudi Arabia (2%) and New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Holland and West Germany (1% each). The bulk of respondents (81%) held individual rather than institutional subscriptions.

All in all, the response we received was very positive. As far as their general evaluation of the paper, 88% of respondents *always* find *Al Fajr* interesting and informative; 75% think it is *rarely* or *never* hard or complicated to read; 70% believe it is *always* or *usually* accurate, while 21% think it is *sometimes* accurate; 65% think the paper is *always* or *usually* balanced, in keeping with the principles of objective reporting, while 24% think it is *sometimes* balanced.

It seems our readers would like to see more analysis, news and Hebrew translations. Many respondents would like more coverage of Palestinians in the diaspora, notably in places other than the US — Europe, Canada, etc. They also expressed an interest in seeing more coverage of economic issues and Palestinian women. We will try to address these requests, except insofar as Hebrew translations are concerned. We have been trying to cut down on Hebrew translations for two reasons: 1) we want to emphasize our own staff's reporting and the Palestinian version of the story; and 2) there is already a plethora of institutions that do regular translations of important items from the Hebrew press, including: the Alternative Information Center (Jerusalem), the Israel Shahak translations, the International Center for Peace in the Middle East (Tel Aviv), and the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace (Tel Aviv), among others.

We asked readers to evaluate various regular sections and pages. We found that the majority (80%) *like* or *want more* of Suleiman Mansour's cartoons, while 56% *like* or *want more* of Ghassan Bishara's Washington, D.C. reports. About 60% *like* the Arab Press page; however, 20% *do not like it* and find it dull. We will try to liven it up. We found that 73% *like* the weekly review section, while only 10% *don't like it*.

As for *Al Fajr*'s format, although we received some comments on sloppy production, typographical errors, etc. 74% say they *like* the format in general while only 5% *do not like it*. An overwhelming 87% *do not want* to see *Al Fajr* in the form of a magazine by any means, with many respondents saying that there are many magazines available.

Finally, we were gratified to learn that 85% of the respondents intend to renew their subscriptions this year, while only 10% do not (5% did not answer). We think that's a pretty good track record.

Najah

continued from page 3

university. They then stormed the campus and broke into the offices of the student council and the Public Relations Department. Soldiers confiscated materials including books, posters, photographs and an exhibit with empty tear gas cannisters picked up on campus following earlier military raids. The soldiers also destroyed some windows and doors on campus.

No one was on campus except the university Dean of Student Affairs, Abd al-Razzaq Rashid, according to *Al Fajr* sources.

Again the following day, December 18, soldiers barricaded access roads leading to Najah and prevented students and faculty from reaching the university. "We have reason to believe the Israeli authorities are looking for justification to close the university for a longer period," said Erakat.

The university has been subject to frequent closures over the past three years. In 1983, Najah was closed for three months; in 1984, for four months; and in 1985, for two months.

The university issued a press release on December 15 which read: "Once again we have to express our fears to all concerned parties that the Israeli authorities seem to be planning to close the university for a longer time, and for reasons totally unrelated to our activities, and we appeal to our friends, and to all those concerned with academic freedom, to try and prevent such a development from materializing."

Land Scam Focus Shifts From Victims to Graft

Avraham Gindi, the Israeli construction magnate whose December 1 arrest catapulted the West Bank land scandal back into the news, was charged with fraud Friday, December 13 in the Tel Aviv District Court. Minutes before he entered the courtroom, Gindi attempted to commit suicide by jumping out of the court building's sixth-story window. He was dragged back into the building by his brother and lawyer.

On December 15, Deputy Defense Minister Micha'el Dekel was interrogated by police about the settlement policies of the Agriculture Ministry under the Likud in which he served as a deputy minister. That same day, Dekel's former aide in the Agriculture Ministry, Avi Tzur, was charged in the Tel Aviv District Court on a number of counts, including bribe-taking.

According to the prosecution, Tsur gave Gindi a letter authorizing the establishment of a settlement on the West Bank land Gindi was offering to buyers in spite of the fact that no such authorization had been granted by the official government body dealing with settlement. Gindi used the letter to convince potential buyers that the government had approved the establishment of a settlement on the land he was selling.

Folklore

Continued from page 11

On the way between the living room and the kitchen is a smaller chamber where the union has displayed a loom used in carpet weaving. The same type of loom is still used today to produce beautiful traditional rugs.

The kitchen contains the oldest types of cooking pots (*Qidreh*), wheat storage closets (*Khabyeh*) and wooden plates and spoons. The same type of wares were used for centuries before copper and aluminum cooking utensils were introduced. Leonie Rock said they faced many difficulties in finding samples of these wares because they had long since been discarded.

The kichen wares are set on short tables or shelves around the room in the same manner as a traditional kitchen would have been set up. The cooking pots are set on clay, wood-burning stoves known as *Moaqadeh*. While the cooking pots were blackened on the outside from repeated use, the stoves appeared brand new.

On a gray table, a set of three types of iron coffee roasting pots are displayed. Next to them, a set of medium-size galvanized jars to keep pickles, olives and jams are placed on another table against the wall. In one corner, a visitor finds a wheat container about one meter high and made of clay mixed with wheat straws. The partially damaged barrel-like container has a hole in one side from which the wheat was extracted. A more modern set of copper kitchen wares is displayed on a shelf against another wall.

In the middle of the room, a small round table known as *Tabliyeh* is arranged with six wooden plates on top. Family members used to sit on the floor to eat.

The kitchen also contains the traditional and very rare *Mansaf* dish. The copper dish, more than 70 centimeters in diameter, is fashioned with two handles on the side for carrying. It requires two people to carry once it is full of the rice and yogurt meal. The *Mansaf* was served as a special meal during wedding celebrations or other important occasions.

Though the traditional Arab house at the Bethlehem Folklore Museum is not yet complete it still reflects the old Palestinian way of life and a visitor may actually get lost among the many articles on display.

An accident on the main Jerusalem-Hebron road resulted in the totalling of this car./AO Photo.

December 11

AL-SHATE' YOUTH JAILED

An Israeli military court in Gaza sentenced Jamal Awad Zakout, 28, of al-Shate' refugee camp to eight months in jail and three years suspended on charges of membership in a Palestinian organization.

December 12

FOUR MINORS DETAINED

Authorities at the Russian Compound police station have not permitted visits to four minors from al-Am'ari refugee camp detained last month on charges of stone-throwing, making petrol bombs and writing (anti-Israeli) graffiti. The four are: Jamal Hamdan, 12, Amjad Masleh, 13, Isam Jaber, 16 and Muhammad al-Baba, 13. They are being held at the Juvenile Deportation.

THREE GET STIFF SENTENCES

Two brothers from Shu'fat refugee camp, just north of Jerusalem, were sentenced to heavy prison terms by the Israeli military court in Lydda. Sayel and Muhammad Salim Ali were sentenced to 20 years and 10 years in prison respectively on charges of membership in a Palestinian organization and other security offenses.

In Gaza, a military court sentenced Ali Hussein al-Zuweidi, 30, of Beit Hanoun, to 17 years in prison on charges of membership in a Palestinian organization, recruiting others, and illegal possession of weapons.

NORWEGIAN DELEGATION TOURS HEBRON

A visiting Norwegian journalistic delegation yesterday toured the city of Hebron and met with local notables and union leaders. The delegation visited the Federation of Unions in the Palestine Market and the home of deposed acting mayor Mustafa Abd al-Nabi Natshe. Natshe briefed the visitors on problems facing the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, notably the establishment of Jewish settlements and heavy taxes. He affirmed his support for the Palestinian-Jordanian accord, stressing that the PLO cannot be excluded from any settlement in the area.

BALATTA CURFEW LIFTED

Military authorities lifted a curfew imposed for six hours on Balatta Refugee Camp outside Nablus following a petrol bomb attack on an Israeli vehicle. Several male residents were rounded up for questioning during the curfew.

GAZAN GETS 14 YEARS

An Israeli military court in Gaza sentenced Rujad Shehadeh Irjhaim, 30, of Gaza, to 14 years in prison on charges of membership in a Palestinian organization, possession of weapons and throwing a bomb at an American institution in Israel.

SUPREME COURT BLOCKS DEMOLITION

Israel's Supreme Court issued an order *nisi* forbidding military authorities to demolish five houses in the village of Burqa in the Nablus district until a three-judge panel rules on the case. The court's order followed an appeal by attorney Ahmad Nazzal, who said a group of Israeli secret service agents were seen photographing the houses recently, a move indicating that the authorities plan to level the houses. The owners believe that the Israelis might demolish the residences because they suspect that three of the owners' sons were involved in a stabbing attack on an Israeli tourist guide in nearby Sabastiya about two months ago. The suspects have reportedly fled to Jordan.

December 13

FOUR JAILED

Two 16-year-old boys from the Hebron area, Yasser Mattir Issa and Hassan Muhammad Abdel Fattah, were sentenced tc one-and-a-half months in prison a similar suspended sentence and a IS450,000 fine by an Israeli military court in Nablus. The two were charged with demonstrating.

The court also sentenced Nimr al-Dari, 23, of Nablus to four months in prison and six months suspended on security charges. Jasser al-Kharraz, 19, also from Nablus, was sentenced to 33 days in prison and six months suspended on charges of throwing stones at Israeli vehicles in 1981.

YOUTH GETS 10 YEARS

Muhammad Ahmad Asa'd, 25, a resident of Artas village in the Bethlehem area, was sentenced by an Israeli military court in Ramallah to 10 years in prison on security charges.

STUDENT JAILED

An Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced university student Abd al-Hadi Dudeh, 22, of the town of Halhoul in the Hebron area, to four years in prison and three years suspended. He was charged with membership in a Palestinian organization and weapons training.

December 15

TWO GAZANS JAILED

An Israeli military court in Gaza sentenced Muhammad Izzat al-Shanti, 30, from the al-Nasser area to six years in prison and four years suspended on charges of membership in a Palestinian organization, illegal possession of weapons and providing services and information. The court also sentenced Jamal Omar Ankid, 32, of al-Shate' Camp to one year in prison and three years suspended on similar charges.

NOTABLES MEET BRITISH MINISTER

A group of Palestinian notables from the West Bank met with the British Minister of State for External Affairs, Timothy Renton, in Jerusalem. The twc sides reviewed recent developments in the Middle East and efforts to achieve a political solution to the Palestinian problem. The British minister affirmed his country's recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, and said the solution can come only from the parties to the conflict and not from the outside. The notables delivered open letters to the British minister noting that Britain, since the beginning of the 20th century, continues to ignore the rights of the Palestinian people, their self-determination and establishment of an independent state.

LAND CONFISCATED

The Israeli Keren Kayaimet firm has laid its hands on an eight-dunum plot of land belonging to the village of Sharfat in the Jerusalem area. Bulldozers have begun working on the land and olive trees have been uprooted. The owner of the land, Musa Hussein Ayyad, said military authorities have in the past confiscated 50 dunums belonging to the same villages in cooperation with local landbrokers.

December 16

VISIT TO DETAINEES DENIED

The families of Jenin detainees went to see their sons. However, the officer in charge claimed that the detainees refused to see anybody because they were on hunger strike. The families staged a march to the military governor's office. They were dispersed and then headed for the Red Cross.

LAND SEIZED

Israeli forces seized about 2000 square meters of land near Natzarin settlement under the pretext of expanding the intersection. The land is owned by Kamal Ibrahim al-Ashram and the Sharab and Attalah families Israeli bulldozers begun uprooting olive and orange trees.

ISRAELI BUS UNDER FIRE

A settlers' bus came under fire while traveling near Bidya village in the Tulkarm district. The authorities imposed a curfew on the village.

HAND GRENADE THROWN AT MILITARY

A hand grenade was tossed it a border police vehicle near al-Bureij Camp. Israeli forces rushed to the area and imposed a curfew on blocs 3 and 4. The forces raided the houses and arrested a number of youths. Some of them are: Jamal Mahmoud Abd al-Khadiq, Yasser Mahmoud Saidam, Jaber Hussein Hamam and Zaki Muhammad an-Nabrashi.

Hebron's old *Casabah* market is still shut off by an iron gate./AO Photo.

The newly-elected student council at Bir Zeit University./AO Photo.

SETTLE IN JERICHO

Israel TV reported that a group from the racist Kach movement tried to settle in an ancient Jewish synagogue north of Jericho. The security forces evicted the group.

TRAVEL BAN

Military authorities imposed a travel ban on residents of the northern West Bank town of Tulkarm, Israel Radio reported. According to the ban, which also includes Tulkarm refugee camps, Shweikeh, Kufr al-Dik, Burqin and Danabeh, the residents will not be permitted to travel to Jordan via the bridges for 'security reasons,' the radio report said.

HOUSE DEMOLISHED

Military authorities demolished the home of Muhammad Hassan Issa Suleiman in Khirbit al-Deir in Ta'amreh village in the Bethlehem area. The reasons for the demolition of the two-story house were not known, but Suleiman has a construction license.

STONES THROWN AT BUS

An Israeli passenger was slightly wounded when an Egged bus was stoned in Beit Sahur, Israel Radio reported. No other details were given.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 20, 21, 22

Theater: Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theater proudly presents excerpts from Dario Fo's *Mistero Buffo*. Performed by Yusef Abu Wardeh and directed by Francois Abu Salem. In Arabic (English translation available). At the Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theater, Jerusalem at 7:00 p.m. Telephone: 280957, 288189.

SELECTED CHRISTMAS EVENTS

For further information please contact the Christian Information Center at Jaffa Gate, Jerusalem. Telephone: 287647.

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Old City: December 24 — Multilingual service at 11:30 p.m. Telephone: 282543.

Christ Church, Jaffa Gate: December 21 — Puppet presentation "Mary had a little lamp," at 1:00 p.m. December 22 — Morning service and puppet presentation at 9:30 am. lessons and carols at 7:00 pm. Telephone: 282082.

St. George's Anglican Cathedral, Nablus Road: December 22 — Holy Communion and sermon at 11:00 a.m. December 24 — Meet at St. George's at 7:30 p.m. to take the bus to Bethlehem to sing carols in the Orthodox Church courtyard at 9:00 p.m. Midnight Mass in St. George's Cathedral at 11:30 p.m. Telephone: 282253, 283261.

Y.M.C.A., Nablus Road: December 24 — Christmas Eve service at Y.M.C.A. Field of the Shepherd in Bethlehem. Buses leave the Y.M.C.A. in East Jerusalem at 3:30 pm. Reserve seats by December 23. Telephone: 282375.

Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center, New Gate: December 24 — Carols and Midnight Mass at 11:30 p.m. December 25 — 9:00 a.m. High Mass and 6:30 p.m. Vespers and Holy Mass. Telephone: 289723.

Church of St. Catherine, Bethlehem: December 24 — St. Catherine's Church will be open from 10:00 p.m. (entrance cards required). At 11:10 p.m.: Solemn Office of Readings. Midnight: Pontifical Eucharistic Concelebration. Telephone: 742425.

Grotto of Nativity, Bethlehem: December 24 — Masses will be held from midnight till 5:15 a.m.

EVENTS IN THE US

December 17 — January 17

Christmas Exhibit: There is a special Christmas exhibit, "Ceramics from Jerusalem and Beduin Textiles," at the Alif Gallery in Georgetown, Washington, D.C. Many beautiful pieces are available for gifts.

Palestinian Druze

Continued from page 9

The mounting resistance by Druze to the Israeli draft has also been coupled with doubts about the authenticity and good intentions of the Druze traditional leadership. Leaders of the DIC claim that it is only out of fear for tribal strife that they have not yet challenged *Sheikh* Amin Tarif and his court who, according to Hatem Halabi, a leading DIC member, has "betrayed his people," by cooperating with the Israeli policymakers. Halabi argued that *Sheikh* Tarif who was appointed by the British mandatory officials to head the Palestinian Druze and remained in the post at the request of the Israelis seems to act out of "his own personal interest and clearly not in the general interest of the Druze. Lebanese and Syrian Druze elect their leaders through a tribunal of notables and holy men."

When *Sheikh* Tarif in 1948 urged his people to cooperate with the new state of Israel he told them that he was promised that the Druze would prosper and would not be hurt by the Israelis. Several men that are close to him and his clan actually volunteered in the new Israeli army and helped suppress Palestinian resistance to Israeli rule. Most Druze however were not so submissive. They carried out several demonstrations against the state and many joined the Syrian army as it fought Israel on the Golan. Sultan Basha, a Golani Druze, attracted hundreds of them as he actually led the Syrian army in the 1948 war.

Abu Radi, a Christian elder who lives side by side with the Druze majority in al-Maghar, recalls that his neighbors "were as defiant of the new rule as we were." In fact he credits his Druze neighbors for the fact that he still lives in Palestine. "Once the Israeli army came to our village and told us to gather in the village center. When we did, they told us to line up according to our religion. They then said that all Muslims and Christians must leave — 'go to Lebanon,' they said. The Druze, who were about three-quarters of the 2000 residents, stood by us and said, 'we either all leave or no one leaves.' They then let us stay because of that."

In 1956, after the Israeli army announced its intention to draft young Druze males, there were more demonstrations. One thousand two hundred Druze *Sheikhs* signed a petition against the draft which they sent to the Israeli government. These protests however seldom appear in Israeli history books or government propaganda. "The Druze requested the draft," they say. Since then pressure to de-Arabize the Druze mounted, especially through education and religion. In the late 50s, Israel introduced the "Druze Heritage" curriculum to Palestinian schools on Mount Karmel. The subject, which is only open to Druze children, tells them that the Druze have been persecuted by Muslims throughout history. It says that to be a Druze is to belong to a national minority rather than to a religion. Combatting this course is a top priority for DIC, according to Halabi.

In 1957, the Israeli government disqualified Islamic religious courts from ruling on Druze affairs and instead established new Druze courts. It appointed men with declared loyalty to the state of Israel to head these courts. Furthermore, the government "exempted" the Druze in 1972 from having to go through the Arab affairs department in the government circles and instead created a separate Druze affairs department. Druze lands meanwhile are far from being safe from Israeli confiscation schemes. Their villages are no different from any Palestinian village inside the 'green line'. They are under-financed, lack essential water and electricity and are threatened by the ever-expanding Jewish settlements around them.

Druze young men meanwhile remain with two choices. Either to serve in the Israeli army and face the possibility of fighting their own people, or defy the draft and face harsh punishment of up to four years in prison. Yet for some 600 per year the second choice is more attractive. In both cases the life course of these youths is violently interrupted and their future becomes bleak. The youths who "choose" to join the Israeli army are faced with yet another dilemma, that of discrimination in the army. A 21-year-old recent discharge from al-Maghar told me that he, like Munir, was stationed in the Naqab desert. "They station Jews in the north and along the coast while they put us in the desert." Druze are only permitted to join the regular army and in some cases the technical corps. Air force, marine and intelligence are off limits as they are considered high risk positions. "They often preferred us to clear land mines because they say we are better trackers than Jews," he said. "We spend a large portion of our time doing cleaning jobs, cooking for others and building camps."

Once they are discharged, the Druze men will get a card that says they have served in the Israeli army in order to present it to prospective employers. But seldom do they find jobs because, still, they are Arabs. A recent Israeli survey on army veterans said that some 67 percent of discharged soldiers remain unemployed for several months after discharge. Druze youth probably occupy the majority of this percentage. Not only did they miss three years of potential university education or trade skills, but they often lose their stamina and end up as day laborers in Israeli settlements. A recent trend has been for Druze youths to get married prior to the service so as to cash in on the larger allowance that the army pays for married soldiers. As they finish the service, they find themselves with wives and children to support and have to scrap any education plans that they had.

Many thus choose to escape the draft. In order to do so they use their imagination. Some shoot their index finger (the trigger finger), some break their legs, some pretend insanity and some turn to religion for protection. Many succeed. They, however, have to pay for it later when they attempt to go to school or find employment. Those who declare insanity will not succeed in either attempt. The others will have a difficult time reaching their objectives as well since Israeli universities and employers are ordered to check them for service cards. If they do not have them they will not be welcomed.

The road which carried Druze young men towards south Lebanon in 1982 runs in front of al-Maghar village and the other 17 Druze villages on the Karmel mountain. That road will remain a reminder of a community torn between loyalty to their family ties and forced service in an army that severed these ties 30 years ago. The only choice that they seem to have is either to remain on the course and face further moral and cultural dilemmas, or oppose the *status quo* altogether, thus joining the Palestinian masses in the process of redefining their identity and rejecting mental and physical foreign domination. One beautiful quote in Kennedy's booklet from a Golani Druze villager sums it up: "Israel can do whatever it wants to us: they can confiscate our land. They can kill us. But they cannot tell us who we are. They cannot change our identity." ■

A nursery school class in Beit Jala celebrates Christmas by recreating the manger scene under their classroom tree.

Christmas: A Private Celebration in Palestine

by Kate Rouhana

Christmas is... savory smells, bells, carols, candles, creches, prayers, freres and presents under the great shining tree. Although the Christmas spirit is more muted in the Holy Land than in the United States and much of the West, it is definitely discernible in the homes and hearts of Palestinian Christians. Christmas here is far less of a public happening and more of a private holiday, given the fact that Christians are only a small percent of the total population. But in certain stores and schools, the holiday is very alive. And of course for the religious establishment and for cities like Nazareth and Bethlehem, Christmas is a Big Event.

For children in private Christian schools, the holiday begins in mid-November when preparations for Christmas shows get underway. The youngest spend weeks decorating their homerooms with all kinds of innovative artwork. Paper chains appear on almost all classroom walls, as do signs which read, "*Kul 'Aam Wa Intum Bikher*" (May every year bring you good fortune), the traditional greeting that is exchanged at Christmas time. Baba Noels (Santa Claus) are fashioned out of every conceivable material, from empty yogurt containers and cotton to eggshells (for the head) and toilet paper rolls (for the body). One perhaps uniquely Palestinian creation is the feather ball. Chicken feathers are carefully dyed in pastel pinks, yellows and greens and then stuck into large painted pine cones. These balls can be hung on the tree or strung up in mobiles. Stars are made out of shiny paper and fashioned into mobiles as well. A different kind of star consists of a ball of painted clay with many-colored matchsticks stuck into it. This one looks almost like a snowflake.

Creches also appear frequently in classrooms, with a large paper base, small camels and other olive wood figurines and a rough-hewn manger. In class children learn to soak beans like chick peas, lentils and fava beans (*ful*) in water until they sprout. These are placed outside the creche to symbolize the weeds and growth around Christ's simple manger. Such bean sprout plots are also commonly placed under the tree at home.

Both Faiths Participate

Celebrating Christmas at private Christian schools is not without complications. Often more than half of the children are Muslim. Some of the Christian students may also be Greek Orthodox, who celebrate all holidays two weeks later than the Western church does, or Armenians, whose Christmas comes on January 19. Yet according to teachers in these schools, there are no problems. Muslims participate in the holiday alongside Christians and have great fun. There seem to be no cases of parental objection to this situation. As for the different celebration schedules, teachers just take care to leave all decor up an extra few weeks.

At the Freres Boys' School in Jerusalem's Old City, for example, the younger students contribute from their own pocket money to decorate the classrooms. Every boy chips in, no matter what his religion, to cover the cost of a small tree, a creche, paper chains and ornaments. Rooms stay decorated until January 20.

Many schools also put on Christmas shows. These range from the strictly religious to the more popular. Starting in mid or late November, each class is coached in some small bit of theatrics — a prayer, psalm, bible passage, traditional carol or skit written for the occasion. Often the children re-enact the birth of Christ: Mary and Joseph come to the inn, shepherds and animals flock around and one lucky girl gets to play the angel and wears a white satin dress with wings. At the Lutheran school *Talitha Kumi* in Beit Jala, they take this so seriously that they have a ready crew of school seamstresses who create new outfits each year according to the teachers' designs. The Christmas shows at *Talitha Kumi*, as at all the six Lutheran schools in the West Bank, are a high point of the year. The lower, middle and upper schools stage three different productions on three different days, all of a strictly religious nature. And the church dignitaries attend the show at all six schools.

At the German Schmidt's Girls School in Jerusalem, the Christmas show takes on a lighter tone. Each class from kindergarten through twelfth grade prepares a popular Arabic or English carol or special skit written by the drama teacher. This year, for example, the ninth grade will put on an original play about Santa Claus. Laden down with hundreds of gifts for boys and girls in Palestine, he arrives at the Allenby Bridge on his way from Jordan. There he meets up with the Israeli bridge authorities, who insist on strip searching him and opening every gift! Poor Santa Claus arrives on the other side without any presents and all the children cry. One girl sobs that she wanted a doll very badly; another chides her gently and tells her, "Don't be silly, we (i.e., the Palestinians) have lost much more than a doll."

Some schools have a tradition of giving token Christmas gifts to every student. A teacher is dressed up as Baba Noel and sent to every classroom to give out sweets or small token gifts. This way all the children can experience and share in the excitement of receiving something frivolous which is so much a part of a child's Christmas. Giving small presents at schools often compensate for the lack of them at home. Many families do not have the extra cash to pour into gifts, particularly as there are so many children that such an endeavor could become positively expensive. So the schools do.

Families that do have some spare cash for presents give only to the youngest children in the following way. Parents go to a toy store and purchase an item or two for each child. They specify the address and the child's name and leave the toys in the store. On Christmas Eve, all the children await the arrival of Baba Noel, frantic with excitement. Sure enough, sooner or later a car comes around the corner honking like mad and Baba Noel steps out with his big sack of toys and teases the youngsters. One by one he calls out their names and presents each with a brightly wrapped toy. After the gifts are opened, he stays with the family for a few minutes and plays with the children, posing for the inevitable snapshots. Then he continues on his merry way to the next house.

This arrangement is a relatively new phenomenon, but it is becoming more and more widespread.

Christmas in Palestine is a family holiday above all. The two main meals — Christmas Eve dinner and lunch the following day — are shared only with the immediate family — those living in the same house. The repast is usually lavish, although there are no special foods that are traditionally associated only with Christmas, except perhaps for chestnuts. Barbecued meat is very common or roast chicken stuffed with *Heshweh* (rice, meat and pine nuts).

After the meal is over, it is customary — indeed obligatory — to visit one's relatives and neighbors. There is even an Arabic verb for this visiting from the word *'Eid*, or holiday, which literally translates into something like "to holiday". Its meaning, of course, is to pay someone a holiday visit.

These holiday visits are marked by a certain simple ritual. One enters a home and tells each person "*Kul 'Aam Wa Intum Bikher*" as one gives them a kiss or a handshake. The host brings very small glasses of any kind of unusual liqueur. Some women make their own sweet pomegranate liqueur, others serve creme de cassis, creme de menthe, brandy or even wine. It is almost obligatory to accept a glass as a holiday gesture. Then a tray of small sweets — chocolates, nuts, dried fruits or cookies — is offered to each guest and everyone takes something.

These visits are particularly frequent on Christmas Day and the day after, although they continue throughout the holiday week until New Year's Day. It used to be protocol for the younger relatives to visit each of the older relatives, but that has become more relaxed and visits are more spontaneous today. It is, however, important to pay a holiday visit to each of one's closest relatives — siblings and parents.

Essentially Religious

In addition to being a family holiday, Christmas is also an essentially religious occasion for some. Many Palestinian Christians do traditionally go to church either Christmas Eve or morning. In the Jerusalem and Bethlehem areas, they have a myriad of denominational choices as well as public celebrations to choose from. Roman and Greek Catholic churches hold services at the Church of Nativity (St. Catherine's) in Bethlehem, which is located over the place Christ is supposed to have been born. This cave, called the Grotto, is the focus of religious Christmas celebration and worship. Local Protestant churches (primarily Anglican and Lutheran) hold services at the Shepherds Field in Beit Sahur.

Two weeks later, on January 6 and 7, the Greek Orthodox take over Bethlehem and conduct prayers and services there. And on January 18, the Armenians hold a midnight service in Bethlehem which lasts all night until 7:00 a.m.

On Christmas Eve day, whenever you date it, the Patriarch of the denomination which celebrates on that day marches from Jerusalem to Bethlehem in what becomes a huge public parade. According to strict traditional protocol that has evolved over centuries, the Patriarch is greeted by the governor of the district, the mayors of Beit Sahur and Beit Jala, and later by the mayor of Bethlehem, together with scouts from all the clubs decked out in their uniforms. This public parade marks the opening of the official religious ceremonies and takes place three times — on the Catholic, Orthodox and Armenian holidays.

On Christmas Eve December 24, mobs representing all faiths, including youth from Kibbutzim, flock to Manger Square in Bethlehem, which is only accessible by special passes due to Israeli security measures.

All in all, for those who seek a popular, family or religious Christmas spirit in the Holy Land, it is certainly there to be found — with a little effort.■